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THE

RUSSIANS AT HOME:

Unpolitical Sketches,

SHOWING

WHAT NEWSPAPERS THEY READ; WHAT THEATRES THEY FREQUENT; AND HOW THEY EAT, DRINK, AND ENJOY THEMSELVES;

WITH OTHER MATTER RELATING CHIEFLY TO LITERATURE, AND MUSIC, AND TO PLACES OF HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS INTEREST IN AND ABOUT MOSCOW;

Comprising also Four Russian Designs (on stone).

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BY

SUTHERLAND EDWARDS.

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LONDON:
WM H. ALLEN AND CO., LEADENHALL STREET.
1861.

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LONDON: PRINTED BY WOODFALL AND KINDER,
ANGEL COURT, SKINNER STREET.

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THE RUSSIANS AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

JOURNALISM.

Among the numerous accredited errors on the subject of Russia, one of the most remarkable is that which exists in England with regard to the diffusion of the French language throughout the empire. Many otherwise well-informed Englishmen imagine that Russian is spoken in Russia merely as Irish is spoken in Ireland, or Flemish in Belgium, and that French is the ordinary medium of communication between all persons possessing the slightest pretensions to education. The English tourist who arrives at St. Petersburg, and finds to his astonishment that the Custom-house officers neither search his person, nor confiscate his "Murray," nor "crumple up" his shirts, as Mr. Cobden would say, is almost equally surprised at their utter inability to understand French. This surprise changes into annoyance, or even alarm, when neither the *isvostchik*, who takes possession of him and puts him on to a *droshky*, nor the first, second, or third person he accosts in the street, nor any of the dealers or customers in any of the shops along the Quai, are able to understand a word he says, let him speak either French, German, or, as a last resource, English. The sensible *isvostchik*, if left to himself, will soon release

the traveller from his difficulty by driving him to a German hotel (in Russia, by the way, all foreigners are "Germans," as formerly in England all foreigners were "Frenchmen"); and the German hotelkeeper will in all probability speak not only French, but also English. Otherwise, to imagine that in any part of Russia a knowledge of French will enable you to find your way about the streets, or to purchase a pound of tea or a quire of paper, is to cherish an illusion which experience will very quickly dispel. Doubtless French is spoken *better* in Russia than in any other country except France; and a few Russian authors, such as Tegoborski, Herzen, and Oulibisheff—to mention three who, in very different circles, have found readers in England—write, as circumstance appear to demand, either in Russian or in French; but it must be remembered, that each of the authors we have named has also published works in German; and it may be safely stated, that in all those houses in which French is the habitual language of the drawing-room, the younger members of the family at least have also a sufficient knowledge of German or English, if not of both. In other words, the upper classes of society in Russia pay great attention to the study of English, German, and especially of French, which is always spoken at the court; but the vast majority of the population know no language but their own.

One thing which would seem to render it impossible, even if it were desired, to perpetuate the tradition of the French language among the Russian hereditary aristocracy, is the peculiar character of the institution of nobility in Russia. An officer who has gained his regiment, or a civil functionary who has attained the *tchinn*, or rank, of councillor of state,—though he be the son of a foreigner, of a merchant, or even of a liberated serf,—is, politically speaking, on an equality with the Volhonskis and the Dolgoroukis. He may become the proprietor of estates and of serfs attached to them, which, with a lower grade in the service, he could neither pur-

chase nor inherit (at present, however, it is far more difficult than formerly for the children of merchants and personal nobles to attain hereditary nobility); and his sons, if they enter the army, will receive their first commission after the usual two years' service in the ranks. On the other hand, if a descendant of Ruric neglected to attain the first *tchinn* in the Government service—either as an officer, a civil functionary, an artist of the academy, or a member of the university—and if his son were guilty of a similar omission, then the grandson would have lost all his rights, and would be in a lower position than a soldier who has gained a medal; for a man who wears a decoration cannot be struck, whereas a private individual who has not taken Government rank is liable, for certain offences, to corporal punishment.

A Russian would be amused to find it gravely stated in an English book that the business of the Russian nation is actually transacted in the native tongue, and that even the newspapers are not written either in French or German. We feel it necessary, however, to impress both these facts, especially the latter, on our readers, who, from continually seeing allusions in the English journals to the *Invalide Russe*, the *Abeille du Nord*, and the *Moskauer Zeitung*, may imagine that the "Russian Invalid," the "Northern Bee," and the "Moscow News," are not published in the Russian language, whereas they certainly never appeared in any other. We may at the same time remark, that the errors we have alluded to are significant, as showing on the part of our journalists (who evidently derive most of their Russian news from French and German sources) a curious ignorance of the life and literature of the Russian nation.

The error respecting the universality of the French tongue in Russia has met with some encouragement from our tourists, who, finding that their Russian acquaintances always addressed them in French, seem to have concluded that that was the only language they could

speak. A man who remains but a few weeks in Russia, and during that time goes only into what is called "good society," may possibly come away with the sincere conviction that French is the habitual language of a considerable portion of the inhabitants; but let him attempt to order a dinner at a *traktir's*, or to purchase a pair of boots or a hat, or anything except bread, which he may procure at a German baker's, or gloves and perfumery, which, if he happen to be at Moscow or St. Petersburg, he may buy from a Frenchman; let him, above all, enter a theatre, or the news-room of a club—and he will soon find out whether Russian is or is not the language of Russia. In the army and navy the word of command is certainly not given in a foreign language; and although in the regiments of the line there are a number of officers who, in the words of a celebrated Russian comedy, "have small waists and even speak French tolerably," the majority of them, whatever may be the dimensions of their waists, have but a scanty acquaintance with the language of Vauban. In the innumerable Government offices, too, no language but Russian is spoken; and it is in the national tongue that the clerks thank you for the inevitable "gratuity" they will extort in return for the smallest service performed, or even promised and not performed.

But if French be not the habitual language of either the middle or the upper portions of Russian society in the present day, we may mention by way of memorandum, that the educated classes scarcely spoke any other in the time of Catherine, and, as nearly as we can judge, until about the end of the reign of Alexander. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century Russia had no literature, except a large number of national songs and certain historical and ecclesiastical records, such as the chronicles of Nestor, the oldest that exist in any modern tongue. Lomonossoff is spoken of as the Malherbe of the Russian language; but his style is also described as being full of Slavonianisms; and the Russians of the present day, who

are unable to read his poems without some difficulty, regard Karámsin as the author who first established the language on its natural basis, after which it underwent a purifying process in the hands of Poushkin. Karamsin, it must be added, was the contemporary and friend of Alexander I., as Poushkin was the contemporary, though not so much the friend, of Nicholas. (Nevertheless, the stories so industriously circulated in England and France about the death of the great Russian poet are quite without foundation. Poushkin was shot in a duel by his brother-in-law Dantès, a French Dutchman, serving in the Russian Horse Guards. He had received numerous favours from the Emperor Nicholas, and on his deathbed was consoled by the assurance that his family should be provided for at the expense of the crown.)

The constant use of the French language, which was so desirable at the commencement of Catherine's reign, when Russia had no literature of her own, became an absurdity and an affectation in the time of Alexander, when the Russians had translated all the best literature of France and England, and when they had plenty of admirable writers in their native tongue. Accordingly Karamsin, in his Travels, attacked and ridiculed this silly custom nearly sixty years since. One would have thought that the invasion of 1812, followed by the march from Moscow to Paris, would, by rousing the patriotism of the nation, have led them to forswear every kind of French imitation. Doubtless some such effect was produced; though in Griboiedoff's comedy, written ten years afterwards, we still find that the most inviting mark for the arrows of a Russian satirist, is the love of his countrymen, and above all, of his countrywomen, for everything that is French.

Even the invasion of the Crimea acted as a powerful stimulant to the national feeling. This was seen in the adoption of the *sarafan* (the old Russian dress) by ladies at evening parties; in the Shchogoleff ear-rings, formed out of four microscopic cannon-balls, suggestive of the

four guns with which the daring artillery-officer, after whom they are named, is supposed to have kept off the whole of the allied fleet at Odessa (vide *Charivari*, 1854); in the long gray jackets, imitated from the soldiers' coats, which were worn by the little boys and girls, and in the complete uniforms in which many of the boys were clad. However, the total abolition of the French language as a medium of communication between Russians can never be brought about by a mere excess of patriotism; nor can satire accomplish it, though satire may aid it. The pitiable custom in accordance with which a small fraction of the community speak, well or ill, a language which the remainder are unable to understand, and which thus, in the midst of a united and powerful empire, produces the semblance of two nations, can only yield to one influence—that of an important national literature; and the effect of this influence is clearly visible, if only in the education of the children of the present generation, who in all the Government gymnasiums are soundly instructed in the language and literature of their country.

It is true that at the present day, in St. Petersburg, the window through which Russia is said to look out upon Europe, one French and one German newspaper are still published. But the German sheet is printed for the exclusive benefit of the numerous German residents, while the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* is little more than a collection of official notifications, which in many cases have appeared the day before in the Police Journal, and which are reproduced in French because in the original they would be unintelligible to foreigners. It also gives court-news, lists of persons who have been decorated, and similar uninteresting information. During the coronation, this journal, we must admit, allowed itself the luxury of a special correspondent in Moscow; but in his first letter the enraptured contributor declared that the sight of so much splendour had completely overpowered him, and that he must decline, for the present, to say anything at

all about the subject which he had been sent specially to report.

Indeed, journalism as we understand it in England, scarcely exists in Russia. A Russian journal is as inferior to an ordinary French journal as the best newspaper in France is to the *Times*. The Russians know this themselves, for they read the *Times*, and translate its articles. Thus when we were in Moscow we observed that the review which the "leading journal" published of Mrs. Stowe's "Dred" was translated and printed in a St. Petersburg magazine a few weeks after its appearance in London. Indeed, it is the magazines and reviews that form the strength of what is called "journalism" in Russia; and many families that subscribe to no newspaper at all receive regularly twice a month the "National Annals", or the "Russian Messenger," which, like the "Contemporary" and the "Library for General Reading," publish in each number a retrospect of political and literary events. These reviews possess a peculiar value from the fact that they have all been started by men of letters, and are not under the influence of Government like the great majority of the newspapers. They are generally about as large as our Quarterlies. We have several "Messengers" by our side, and find that each fortnightly Number of that publication contains 384 pages of nearly the same size as the "Cornhill Magazine." The subscription to the "Messenger" is fifteen roubles a year —£2 10s., or about 2s. a copy; so that, regard being had only to the amount of printed matter sold, it is really the cheapest periodical of the kind in Europe. Even in England, a very large number of a review of the dimensions we have stated would have to be sold in order merely to cover the expenses; but in Russia, where paper and printing cost nearly double what they do with us, the sale of such a work must be enormous. "Nowhere except in England," says Mr. Herzen, "has the influence of reviews been so great as in Russia. It is, in

fact, the best form for spreading light through a vast country. The 'Telegraph,' the 'Moscow Messenger,' the 'Telescope,' the 'Library for General Reading,' the 'National Annals,' and their natural son the 'Contemporary,' without reference to their very different tendencies, have circulated an immense amount of information, notions, and ideas during the last twenty-five years. They have rendered it possible for the inhabitants of Omsk and Tobolsk to read the novels of Dickens or George Sand two months after their publication in London or Paris. The fact of their appearing periodically has, moreover, the advantage of rousing indolent readers." *

One difficulty which is inseparable from any attempt to make a chapter on contemporary Russian reviews interesting to the English public, is found in the fact that most English readers know nothing either of Russian authors who are dead, or of those who are living, or, indeed, that there are any living Russian authors at all. Even Karamsin's History has never been translated into English; and his Travels, which were translated (from a German edition) more than half a century ago, are now out of print. Nothing of Poushkin's has appeared in English,—if we except a mutilated version of the "Queen of Spades," of which the source was unacknowledged, and which Poushkin himself would have been the first to disavow. Gogol has been treated in a similar fashion; that is to say, a charming little tale of his, with rather an untranslatable title (which, however, signifies as nearly as possible "A Country Couple of the Olden Time"), after being adapted from the French, was subjected to the Procrustean operation, so as to bring it within the limits of an article in a penny paper. Lermontoff has met with a

* The "Contemporary" appears once a month, and each volume contains about 700 pages of forty-four lines. Six of these general reviews are now published in Russia, besides a large number of special journals.

somewhat better fate in England. His poetry, like that of Poushkin, is utterly unknown; but those who may wish to read his "Hero of Our Own Time," can obtain a very spirited English translation of the French rendering of the German version of the Russian original. We shall have finished the list of Russian poets, novelists, and dramatists belonging to the present century who have been heard of in England, when we have mentioned the name of Griboiedoff. The translation of that author's "Gore ot Ouma" has been executed very conscientiously (but not elegantly) by a compatriot named Benardaky. What an advantage it would be if some of those Russian gentlemen who write books in English on the subject of Russia would occasionally imitate Mr. Benardaky's example, and, forgetting for a time their tirades against absolutism, and their anecdotes about the Emperor Nicholas, would occupy themselves with translating some of the master-pieces of their country's literature! In speaking of the authors, they could omit biographical details; otherwise any fair account of the lives of Karamsin, Kriloff, Poushkin, Joukovsky, Gogol, or Griboïedoff—six of the most eminent writers the last half-century produced—would at once disprove their favourite theory about the persecution of intellectual superiority in Russia; though it cannot be doubted that under Nicholas the position of an independent *journalist* was one of difficulty and danger. But even during the last few years, the number of political exiles from all parts of Europe living in England, while proving the liberality of our institutions, also shows that Russia—as Mr. Herzen himself so well observes—does not terminate at the frontier, but that it extends over all the continent. Victor Hugo and Freiligrath could testify that it is not the only country which will not tolerate hostile criticism of the State. It must be remembered, too, in connection with the suppression of certain reviews by the Emperor Nicholas, that their editors, and especially Polevoi, had attacked the

despotic system with a vigour and directness of which we have had no instance in Imperial France. On the other hand, as the Russian empire is governed more in accordance with the general wishes of the people than any other of the nations which are ruled despotically, there is less persecution there—or rather was, during the last reign—than in countries which are split up into parties, or, as in the case of Austria, into distinct nationalities.

The first thing we remark in the Russian reviews, is the great attention they pay to English literature. The most popular of our works of fiction are translated; and those books which even at home are not too generally read, and which in France and Germany have scarcely been heard of, are made the subjects of long notices. The next feature that strikes us is the thoroughly English—that is to say, positive—style of the contents, in which we find no frivolous feuilletonism, no unnatural romance, and at the same time no mysticism, nor sentimentalism; but novels and tales founded upon observation, sketches of character, satire of officials, and of various kinds of governmental abuses, articles on the resources of the country, on its early history, and on its future development.

Let us see what the "Contemporary," which was established by the poet Poushkin, and which is one of the best of the four reviews we have selected for examination, was publishing during the first year of the war.

In their address to the subscribers at the end of the twelvemonth, the editors, Nekrassoff, and Panaeff, state that, owing to the all absorbing interest of political affairs, they had been prepared for a considerable falling-off in the number of their subscribers. These anticipations, however, had happily not been fulfilled; and the editors, while thanking the readers for their continued sympathy and support, regarded the success of their journal under such adverse circumstances as an indication that literature was no longer taken up as an occasional

amusement in Russia, but that its study had now become an indispensable necessity.

Among the novels and tales that had appeared during the year were the following :—

The Two Friends. By Tourguéneff.

Bleak House. By Charles Dickens.

Moumounia. By Tourguéneff.

The Poor Girl. By Panaeff.

Mrs. Perkins's Ball. By Thackeray.

Fanfaron : a Specimen of one of our own Snobs. By Pisemsky.

Memoirs of a Cavalry Officer during the Turkish War of 1828.

A Journey to Paris: being Two Chapters from the Paris Sketch-book. By Thackeray.

The Adventures of Major Gahagan. By Thackeray.

Experiments with Russian Snobs. By Panaeff.

Men of Character. By Douglas Jerrold.

The contributions of verse are very numerous, as might be expected in Russia, where, if we except Gogol, all the really great writers in the *belles lettres* are poets. It would be useless to mention the authors who had distinguished themselves in this department ; but with regard to two of them,—Nekrassoff, the editor, and Count Tolstoi, who has a double reputation as a poet, and a writer of prose,—we shall have to say a few words hereafter. We must not omit to state, that two unpublished poems by Lermontoff, together with an extract from one of his letters, had found their way to the pages of the "Contemporary."

The list of biographical, critical, and scientific articles includes:

The Life and Dramatic Works of R. B. Sheridan. By Droujinin.

Delvig.* By Gaevsky.

* Baron Delvig was the schoolfellow and intimate friend of Poushkin, and was associated with him in the editorship of a literary journal.

Thackeray's Lectures on the English Humorists. By a Provincial Subscriber.

Attempt at a Biography of Gogol (with forty unpublished letters). By N. M.

Souvenirs of Gogol, recalled by the "Attempt at a Biography." By Longenoff.

Two Articles on the Novels and Tales relating to the Working Classes.

Three Articles on the present Position of Turkey.

Life and Death of the last Ruler of Montenegro. By Kavalevsky.*

On the Sincerity of Contemporary Criticism.

The warlike Deeds of the Don Cossacks against the Khan of the Crimea and Pougatcheff the Pretender in the Years 1773 and 1774.

Works on the Russian Language published in 1853. By Zernina.

Byzantine Portraits: The Emperor Basil I., the Macedonian. By Zernina.

Gerard Frederic Muller. By Salavieff.

Makaroff and his Journal the "Moscow Mercury." By Gennade.

Travels in the Polar Regions and along the Coast of White Russia. By Shpelevsky.

The editors, in conclusion, state, that they have long been endeavouring to improve the critical portion of their journal, and that they believe they have now to some extent succeeded in doing so. In the meanwhile, the "Contemporary" will continue to criticize the other periodicals, and invites criticism in return. The Prospectus for the ensuing year (the nineteenth of the journal's existence) promises, in addition to tales, novels, &c., articles on all new Russian books as they are published, and remarks on the contents of the Russian journals by the "new poet," &c.

The "new poet" is Panaeff, the joint-editor with Ne-

* This writer has since been appointed Minister of Public Instruction, and Rector of the Moscow University.

krassoff. That journals should write about a new poet appears natural enough; but that a poet, new or old, should write about journals will strike the reader as somewhat strange. We have explained, however, that, in St. Petersburg and Moscow, what are called journals are for the most part large reviews; while as regards the "new poet," we must state, that in the more important of the articles bearing that signature Panaeff justifies the *nom de plume* which he affixes to all his critical contributions by the introduction of epigrams and fables, and of verses written in contemptuous imitation of the victim he happens to have selected. He is, in fact, the satirical writer of the review. For some time the identity of Panaeff and the new poet remained a secret; but it is now understood that the editor is the "new poet" whenever he wishes to indulge in criticism, and that he becomes Panaeff again to write sketches of society and tales. Panaeff wrote an excellent article on Mr. Thackeray's "Snob Papers," which he concluded by pointing out certain Russian snobs, who were only waiting to be dissected. Soon afterwards he commenced his "Experiments with Russian Snobs," No. I. being the "Snob of the Great World." This author does not despatch a snob in a single paper, but tells a tale about each; so that his sketches are not imitated, even as to form, from Mr. Thackeray's admirable book. Our readers will not be able to pronounce it, but they may feel interested in *seeing* that the Russian word for "snob" is *khlishch.*

It will be observed, that four years ago, before the "Miscellanies" were published, the editors of the "Contemporary" had been looking up Mr. Thackeray's early writings in "Frazer's Magazine," and had even laid the "Paris Sketch-books" under contribution. "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," and the "Newcomes," were translated as they appeared; and we believe the Russians can now read in their own language everything that Mr. Thackeray has written, with the exception perhaps of the "Irish Sketch-

book," the local colouring of which—as the St. Petersburg reviews have a large circulation in Siberia, and penetrate even to the confines of China,—might fail to be appreciated by many of the subscribers. Indeed, of the O'Mulligan's humour one would think a great deal must have been lost before that amusing Irishman who lived "over there" reached even so far east as Nijni-Novgood. But M. Oulibisheff tells us that Nijni has its Opera and its Philharmonic Society; and of course there are balls and polkas and suppers and intruders in Russia as in England, and we believe there are even Irishmen,—at all events there are Poles. Thanks too to the completeness of Mr. Thackeray's characters, they must lose less than those of any other novelist in translation. The picturesque personages of Mr. Dickens's fictions, with their highly characteristic language, cannot but suffer even in the hands of the most skilful translator; but his vivid descriptions, on the other hand, can be appreciated in Russian almost as well as in English, and there is an amount of natural feeling and humour in all his books which not even a French translator could destroy, and which a Russian would be sure not to injure.*

Of the anonymous "provincial subscriber" who contributes a review of Mr. Thackeray's lectures we know nothing; but Pisemsky, who writes "Fanfaron, a Specimen of one of our own Snobs," has produced several comedies, and has gained a great reputation by his novels and sketches of peasant-life.

Tourguéneff, the author of "The Two Friends," "Moumounia," &c., is probably the most popular living writer in Russia. In England he is not known. In France he is known by an imperfect, incorrect translation of his "Memoirs of a Sportsman," published five years since,

* Most of the French translations of Mr. Thackeray's works are remarkably free "imitations," and in one version of "Vanity Fair," "the century was in its teens" is rendered by "*le siècle était dans les larmes.*"

under the title of "*Mémoires d'un Seigneur Russe.*" We have not seen this translation; but Tourguéneff denounced it himself in the pages of the "Contemporary" as an absurd imposition, in which nothing of the original could be recognized. One of Tourguéneff's most admired books was written as a corrective to Lermontoff's "Hero of our own Time," which enjoyed a Werther-like success during the years succeeding its first publication. His work on the writings of Gogol,—who had devoted a large portion of his life to the branding of corrupt officials,—was refused a licence by the censor; but Tourguéneff published it all the same, and thus incurred the penalty of exile, from which he was only saved by the personal intercession of the Grand Duke Alexander, now Alexander II.

Nekrassoff, the other editor of the "Contemporary," confines himself to the composition of verse. A volume of his collected poems,—of which many referred to subjects of the day,—was recently published with success in St. Petersburg; but it was rumoured that a second edition would not be permitted by the censorship. It is right to add, that this rumour was soon afterwards ascribed to the booksellers, who sometimes spread, or at all events profit by the circulation of such reports, in order to have a pretext for selling their books at double or treble the marked price.

Next to Tourguéneff, one of the most successful writers of the day in Russia seems to be Gregorovitch. Like Tourguéneff, like Pisemsky, and like another writer named Dahl, whose talent is chiefly comic, Gregorovitch loves to relate the life of the Russian peasants. This author has great descriptive talents. He has none of those broad rapid touches by means of which Poushkin (as in the opening of the "Gipsies") paints a whole scene in a few lines. On the contrary, he delights in detail; and in one of his tales, which opens in the streets of St. Petersburg on a winter's night, we have the crunching

of the sledges on the snow, the howling of the wind, the red noses, the various kinds of furs, and a number of other minute particulars which altogether form an admirable picture. After leaving the university, Gregorovitch served in the engineers; but soon left the army, in consequence, it is said, of a reprimand from the commander-in-chief of the Guard. He then entered the St. Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts, where he studied under the late Brouloff,—a painter of genius, but who, in his best-known pictures, is no more Russian than Poussin was French, and who has not founded a school. Then, abandoning art, he lived for many years in the country: and afterwards turned his experience and his pictorial faculty to account by describing the rural life of Russia. His most celebrated work is "Anton Goremyka" (from *gore*, grief), of which the hero may be to some extent considered the Uncle Tom of Russian serfdom: he is ill-treated, forced into crime, and then exiled. We may also mention, that Tourguénieff's "Moumounia" turns on the misery of a faithful all-suffering serf who has a cruel master. Each of these books has two morals: first, that it is infamous to ill-treat slaves; secondly, that slavery is an infamous institution.

Gregorovitch, with Count Tolstoi (one of the poetical contributors to the "Contemporary"), appears to form the chief support of the review entitled "The Library for General Reading." The following is a list of articles which appeared in the Number for January 1, 1857:—

1. Translation from Horace ("Carmen Sæculare").
2. Verses. By Maikoff, Count Tolstoi, and others.
3. Translation from André Chénier. By Count Tolstoi.
4. Relations in the Capital. By Gregorovitch.
5. The Strolling Player: a Tale from the Polish. By Krashevsky.
6. Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands. By H. B. Stowe.

7. Bakhtchiserai; a Fragment from a Traveller's Note-book. By Berg.

8. Women's Conversation. By Shcherbina.

9. History of Greece. By George Grote.

10. The Rise of the Netherlands. By John Lothrop Motley.

Independently of the three reviews of English works. the Number contains notices of the "Sketches of Peasant-Life," by Pisemsky (of whom we have already spoken); of the "Report of the Alexandrovsky Lyceum for 1857" (with remarks on the moral and physical education of children in Russia); and of a recent translation into Russian verse of Sophocles' "Antigone."

Of such works as Grote's "History of Greece" and Motley's "History of the Rise of the Netherlands," we certainly should not have expected to hear in Russia, which, it will be observed, receives our literature direct from England. Indeed many of the English books with which translators and reviewers have rendered the Russian public familiar are totally unknown in France, and nearly so in Germany. It will be observed, that by English books we mean books written in the English language, whether executed by Englishmen or by Americans.

Let us now examine the Number of "National Annals" for the first fortnight of January, 1857:—

1. Poems. By various Authors.

2. The Portrait Gallery; a Novel. By Dankoffsky.

3. Pictures of Russian Life. By Dahl.

4. Little Dorrit. By Charles Dickens.

5. Bogdan Khmelnitski; an Episode from the History of Poland.

6. A Day in Paris. By Stachel.

7. Sketches of Russian Life in the 18th Century. By Kavelin.

8. Criticism and Bibliography.

Under the head of "Criticism and Bibliography" we find notices of the following new publications:—

Novels and Tales. By Tourgnéneff.

Ancient Russian Chronicles. Edited by Soutchomlenoff.

Almanacs for 1857.

Kieff and its Ancient Seminary. By Askotchensky.

Life of Plato, the Metropolitan. By Snegereff.

New Guide from Moscow to the Troitsa (the celebrated Monastery of the Holy Trinity).

Memoirs of the St. Petersburg Mineral Society.

Text-book of Vegetable Chemistry.

Family Chronicles. By Aksakoff.

The last-mentioned work is a very remarkable production. The writer treats of serfdom, exhibits its good and its bad side, shows how some proprietors neglect their peasants, and adduces cases of ill-treatment which have come within his own knowledge. Indeed, the book is really a collection of chronicles and reminiscences, and as such is deeply interesting.

The ninth article in the review is devoted to the political future of England, and to a consideration of M. de Montalembert's work published under that title.

Vladimir Dahl, the author of article No. 3, has long enjoyed a reputation as a writer of short tales, which are generally comic, and always strikingly national. He narrates admirably; and although there is no mere descriptive writing in his stories, he leaves a very distinct impression on the reader's mind of every character he introduces. Like Gogol, the father of Russian prose fiction, and like Tourguéneff, Gregorovitch, and Pisemski in the present day, Dahl is eminently truthful. His judges take bribes; he calls a spade a spade, and a Cossack a thief. In this truthfulness of the modern writers lies the hope of Russian literature, and perhaps even of Russia itself. If Gogol's celebrated comedy, and his great narrative work the "Dead Souls," bring to light an amount of corruption which the worst enemy of Russia would scarcely have believed to exist in that em-

pire, it is at all events satisfactory to know that it *has* seen the light, and that the country and the government dare to look the evil in the face; for being recognized, it is evident that it must be crushed, or that it will undermine Russia.

It has been seen from the contents of three of the Russian reviews that, even during the reign of Nicholas, the question which pre-occupied Russian authors, and therefore Russian readers, and, in short, all thinking persons in the empire, was the position of the serfs. If we are to accept the pictures of the Russian novelists or social chronicles as true, the serfs must be well worthy of their liberty. The writers are themselves proprietors, and ought to know. The present Emperor was long since notoriously in favour of the abolition of serfdom; and his predecessor appears to have entertained similar views as regards *this* subject. At all events, Nicholas ameliorated the condition of the peasant in many important respects. But, the fact is, there is something which the peasant fears far more than his master, more even than the most exacting and tyrannical German steward, namely, the oppression and extortion of the government officials; and unless the liberation of the serfs be preceded by some very extensive administrative and legal reforms, the peasant, when he is set free, will be in about as enviable a position as the pigeons that are "liberated" in the shooting-ground of the Red House. In Russia, law instead of being a protection is a terror. Even in the capitals, the *qvartalny*, or commissary of police, is a mere Tartar, enforcing contributions from every tradesman who has a sign over his shop, every proprietor of a place of entertainment, and generally from all who need his sanction or assistance. If you have been robbed once, do not get robbed twice by going to the police-office with a complaint. If you even recognize the thief, do not give him into custody, or he may force you to commence an interminable pro-

secution, from which you will be glad to escape by paying both the accidental thief who has robbed you in private and the habitual ones who plunder you almost publicly. In civil processes, thanks to secret tribunal, and documentary evidence, the law is equally powerless, or powerful only for evil. And if rich citizens in St. Petersburg and Moscow have to submit to the exactions of petty officials, what would be the position of poor unprotected peasants left to struggle against their rapacity alone?

But Russian officialism and its multifarious abuses cannot be done justice to in a few sentences, nor even in an entire chapter. Suffice it for the present to say, that it has suggested to a writer, whose pseudonym is Shchedrin,* a series of papers which appear, or did appear, every fortnight in the "Russian Messenger," under the title of "Provincial Sketches," and which soon gained for its author the reputation of being one of the most just, and therefore one of the severest, satirists who had appeared in Russia. The propriety and necessity of liberating the serfs being now recognized, Shchedrin's articles possess more actual value than those which continue to treat of the condition of the peasant.

Shchedrin's contributions to the "Messenger" also mark the change which has taken place in Russian journalism since the accession of the present Emperor. Such articles would not have been tolerated during the last reign: for though the Emperor Nicholas was certainly not the tyrant we generally suppose him to have been (there are limits in all things), it must be remembered that the revolt which broke out on the occasion of his accession was headed by officers, of whom one was a great poet, while the others were either actively engaged in literature, or at all events literary by inclination and study. To ignore this in speaking of the late Emperor's

* The *shch* looks very difficult; but we pronounce it easily enough in "pari*sh* *ch*urch; and it is more difficult, by a *t* to say "sma*sht* *ch*ina."

treatment of authors and journalists may appear very liberal, but it is scarcely just. Louis Napoleon, before banishing the Hugos, ought perhaps to have reflected that it was Victor Hugo himself who, under Louis Philippe, protested against the continued exile of the Napoleon family; but the Emperor Nicholas had no such debt of gratitude to any of the writers of his period. The Emperor Alexander II., however, has had literary sympathies from his youth; and we have already mentioned that it was through his intercession the most popular Russian writer of the present day was saved from exile. His preceptor was Joukovsky, the translator of Homer, and of innumerable English and German poets, and the author of the "Minstrel in the Russian Camp," one of the most spirited poems in the Russian language. Doubtless to the influence of such a teacher—who was the intimate friend of Poushkin, Kriloff, and all the most eminent writers of his time—may be attributed much of the liberal disposition of the present Emperor. This disposition has manifested itself since his accession in various ways; among others, in some important educational reforms, and especially in the increased liberty accorded to the productions of the press.

The "Russian Messenger," which has been started during the present reign, introduces us to two writers whose names are not met with among the contributors to the other reviews: Shchedrin, already mentioned, and Koudryatseff, the professor of history in the Moscow University. Tourguéneff and Count Tolstoi having completed their respective engagements with the "Contemporary," had promised contributions to the new magazine, and we believe that it was in the "Russian Messenger" that Count Tolstoi's tale of the interior of Sebastopol during the siege afterwards appeared. From the prospectus for 1857 it appears that many of the writers are going abroad, profiting by the new law which fixes the price of a foreign passport at thirty shillings once and for all, instead of forty or fifty pounds a year. Thus Kou-

dryatseff, after finishing a life of Charles V., starts for foreign parts; and in the first of the January Numbers describes his travelling impressions, from Berlin to Vienna. The same Number contains an article on Faraday and his discoveries; and from other papers on photography and engraving, it would appear that scientific subjects meet with more than ordinary attention in this review. In the last Numbers for 1856, we find a translation into Russian verse of Crabbe's "Parish Register," accompanied by a note which refers the reader to the "Contemporary" for a critical paper on the English poet's works. The life and career of Sir R. Peel are also treated of in a series of articles, and an instalment of Mrs. Gaskell's "North and South" brings a translation of that work nearly to a conclusion. In 1857 the "Russian Messenger" printed papers on the subject of trial by jury and law reform—topics which would be generally considered more suited to the Meridian of Greenwich than to that of St. Petersburg.

We may also mention that the trial of Montalembert, the whole of the Orsini affair, and especially the acquittal of Dr. Bernard, were treated from what we might almost call the English point of view, and scarcely a Number of the "Russian Messenger" now appears without some article in which the writer takes occasion to laud the principle of self-government, and to expose the viciousness of the French system of centralization supported by military force.

All the chief reviews and journals of Russia publish accounts of the proceedings in our Houses of Parliament, and in one of the Numbers of the "Russian Messenger," we find a full report of the great debate which preceded the overthrow of the Derby Cabinet translated literally from the *Times*, and occupying eighty pages of the review. The writer, in a series of notes, gives political and biographical particulars respecting the various speakers. He also finds it necessary, in elucidation of some of the speeches, to call attention to the delusion that existed in England on the

subject of an alliance between France and Russia. In one of the July Numbers (1859) there is an article on the Peace of Villafranca, in which the liberator of Italy is very severely handled. At the same time it must not be supposed that Austria is spared. Indeed, it appears that the harshness of some of the "Messenger's" articles against Russia's favourite enemy had called forth remonstrances from the "Rousky Invalid." To these, the "Messenger" replies with much spirit, that the measure of courtesy due to a foreign government is not the same in an independent organ and in a journal known to be salaried by the government.

The second of the two July Numbers of the "Russian Messenger" contains the commencement of a translation of Adam Bede, and from the great space devoted to English literature, and English affairs in every Number of this review, it is evident that England is the country especially studied by the reform party in Russia.

In conclusion, let us give the substance of an article, published by the "Russian Messenger," on the subject of the Indian mutiny.

"We Russians," says a writer, in one of the Numbers for February, 1858, "have no prejudices against any nation. When the name of England is mentioned, it is far from being associated with any feeling of animosity. With the exterior policy of England we do not sympathize, but we shall always have enough impartiality and conscientiousness to recognize the unity of her mission with our own; England and Russia are alike called to spread the light of European life through the darkness which overspreads Asia. On that field we are allies; there is solidarity between us, and civilization carried on to the soil of barbarous nations, whether under the Russian or English flag, is alike a gain for humanity. We have been surprised that the English journals should wonder at this—that neither the organs of Russian thought nor *Le Nord* hastened to hurl reproaches at

England, but appreciated truthfully the ruinous import of the Indian insurrection. Russia, for the most part, still remains an enigma, a spectre created by the imagination of Western Europe. But either in all sincerity, or merely from a sense of decency (for there would be no virtue in such cynicism), we quietly await the end of the struggle, with faith in its terminating happily for Christian civilization.

"The French newspapers in general look upon the affair quite differently. Every day the phalanx increases of England's calumniators, who hasten to raise their flag on the ruins of English tolerance and *self-government*,* and try to prove to the world that nothing but the French system and military force is capable of upholding society. The *Revue des Deux Mondes*, standing out from among all the daily clamour, takes a more tranquil view of the matter, and is not without the common sense necessary to enable it to judge of the question. The article of John Lemoinne may be taken as a proof of this." [Here the writer gives an abstract of M. Lemoinne's article.]

"We need not dwell upon the interesting details of which John Lemoinne's article is full. We consider that we have already called sufficient attention to the paper, and we shall conclude with an anecdote respecting the author. John Lemoinne had been a constant contributor to the *Journal des Débats*. At the beginning of the present year he wrote an article which displeased the Austrian Government, and Baron Hubner proposed this alternative to the proprietors of the *Débats*: either that the obnoxious author should be excluded from the number of contributors, or that the journal should be prohibited throughout the Austrian dominions. The material interest triumphed, and the name of John Lemoinne has ceased to appear in the columns of the *Journal des Débats*. We hope to meet with him oftener in the

* This word is printed in English.

Revue des Deux Mondes, and, in the meanwhile, to those who wish to become better acquainted with this writer, we may point out his recently-published volumes, entitled *Etudes critiques et biographiques.*"

Elsewhere, in speaking of foreign journals and their observations on the Indian mutiny, the writer remarks that many of them have taken the part of the sepoys. "If England," he continues, "would know how many enemies she has in Europe, she may ascertain it now. Absolutists, ultramontanes, demagogues, and radicals of various kinds, are delighted at what has occurred; they make common cause, wish success to the sepoys, and sing funeral hymns to England. Some journals publish everything that is bad about England, and omit all that is good. Others give vent to their hatred under the pretext of writing in the cause of humanity, and sympathizing with the weak. In one of the Austrian newspapers, it was said that 'the insurrection of the sepoys was England's first stroke of apoplexy.' The fact is, no nation has been so successful in all her enterprises as England; and therefore she is envied. This envy is shown on every opportunity, and at present it is especially remarkable in the French press. The French, feeling their own incapacity to colonize, cannot forgive the English the success which has attended all their efforts in that direction; and it is difficult for them to forget that some of the colonies now belonging to England were once in the possession of France.

"It may be truly said, that if England were to lose India, she herself would not suffer so much as her colonies, and that at the same time the loss would be a terrible misfortune for mankind. The English in Asia represent the commencement of civilization and humanity, and if by a great and sudden effort like the present, the inhabitants of India were to shake off the power under which they now live, then, undoubtedly, they would fall under the yoke of their own bloodthirsty

tyrants, and would return to all the horrors of barbarism. In reality, the English have been the saviours of India. They put an end to the reign of brigandage, and replaced it by one of justice and order. They appear as the defenders of the rights of humanity. During whole centuries the history of India presents one continual spectacle of murder and devastation. The bloody era terminates with the conquests of the English, and though their Government has not been an example of all possible perfection, it is impossible not to admit that it has been incomparably more mild, humane, and just than all other Governments under which Hindoos have ever lived. The English developed the natural productiveness of the country, made roads and a railway, and established order. Their mistake consisted in believing that they had already formed a nation, and this has led to its inevitable consequence—the triumph of barbarism, and the temporary defeat of a strong, but blindly-confident power." There can be no doubt, says the writer, about the ultimate result of the struggle, but, in the meanwhile, "the English Government in India will have to undergo a thorough change. We cannot think of this without deep regret. We cannot but admit that recent incidents will have disastrous effects on freedom generally. They will aid the triumph of the military element and the introduction of centralization. During the last two or three years, the English have received a severe lesson, first in the Crimea, and then in India. They were obliged to confess the bitter truth, that the golden age has not yet commenced, and that we live in an age of iron, when nations, even in the midst of peace, must still remain fully armed, and when they can only enjoy comfort and security on condition of keeping a drawn sword at their pillow. Taught by severe experience, the English will be obliged to yield to necessity, and keep up a large standing army; and they are already preparing themselves for that extreme measure against which the

natural independence of the nation has hitherto always revolted."

With respect to the causes which led to the mutiny, it cannot be expected that the Russian writer should discover any not already noticed in the English papers. On the whole he is of opinion, that the rising had its origin in our excessive confidence. As regards the religious question, he considers we were far too tolerant of the natives' idolatry; and, indeed, the only serious charge he brings against us is, that we countenanced "the disgusting mysteries of Asiatic faith," and abstained from introducing Christian instruction into the schools we established. The little progress made by the Hindoos in civilization under our rule proves nothing. India, remarks the writer, belonged not to the British Government, but to a private company, and what effect in only a hundred years could a few thousand Englishmen have on 140,000,000 of natives? But, besides, important reforms have really been introduced since 1834, and it should be remembered that whenever a cruel or immoral policy was pursued in Hindoostan, the English themselves were the first to protest against it; this Fox, Burke, and Sheridan notoriously did on various occasions in the House of Commons. If the English Government for a long time refused to interfere with the Company's privileges, it was owing to that respect for private liberty and private interests, which is felt by the Crown, the Parliament, and the whole British nation. "Government," says the "Russian Messenger," "dared not interfere with the rights of the Company, as it dares not interfere with property not its own, nor with the personal freedom of any Englishman."

As a contrast to the envy and hatred with which our country is regarded in many parts of Europe, the solidity of American friendship for England is pointed out and dwelt upon. "The English and Americans often quarrel between themselves, and on numerous points; but these

are their own private affairs, conducted in their own language. Therefore, we were not in the least astonished to read articles in the American papers, in which, treating the question (of the mutiny) from an international point of view, the writers arrive at the following significant conclusion: 'The decline and fall of England would be to us a matter of special concern. Independently of the fact that Great Britain is our nearest ally, and that our commercial relations with her are constant and enormous, we cannot but take a particular interest in her position, because in England we find the root and the refuge of European liberty. It is almost the only country in Europe in which it is possible to speak, write, think, and act with freedom: the fall of England would check for centuries the progress of liberty.'"

It will surprise most of our readers to find a Russian review hurling its sarcasms at "absolutists," and the advocates of military despotism, without, however, forgetting "radicals of every description." But we have translated the expressions of the "Russian Messenger" literally, and the manner in which the subject of the Indian mutiny is discussed may be taken as a fair specimen of the style in which political questions are dealt with at present in the Russian reviews.

In a more recent article, on the subject of the Peace of Villafranca, the writer quotes Chateaubriand's words, "*La France sera toujour soldat*," and expresses a conviction that France, especially under its present system, cannot remain long at peace. In a paper on the position of the press in Russia published last autumn in answer to some remarks in a foreign journal, much stress is laid on the difference between official and non-official journals. Both are submitted to the censorship, but in the latter, the writers* express their own personal opinions freely, "and under no other conditions," says the author of the article, "would we consent to discuss politics at all."

* As no one who reads them can doubt.

In conclusion, we must explain that we have spoken at greater length of the "Messenger," than of any of the other literary and political reviews published in Russia, because that is the only one we have been in the habit of receiving in London; and that we subscribed to it in preference to the others because, founded just after the accession of the present Emperor, it appeared to us in Moscow that it studied with particular attention the reforming policy, which was inaugurated with his reign.

CHAPTER II.

THE CENSORSHIP.

If we had undertaken to write about Russia under Nicholas I. instead of under Alexander II., we should here have had to speak of numerous persecutions directed against journalists. We have already mentioned one probable and personal reason that the Emperor Nicholas may have had for detesting journalists and political writers: they greatly aided the revolt of 1825, which threatened the destruction of the Imperial family and the abolition of the imperial throne. The Emperor's hostility to this class of literary men has, however, been misconstrued into a hatred of all literature, and, indeed, of intellect generally. We do not think the two are synonymous. Nicholas ruled despotically, and could brook no opposition; but it does not follow from this that he had a horror of the beautiful, and wished to suppress thought throughout his empire. Some of his educational measures, and his liberality to the great poet and the great historian who died during his reign (a liberality which, in each case, was extended to their families at a moment when the power of the writers to aid the Emperor for good or evil

was about to cease for ever), go far to prove the contrary; and the works of the Russian comic authors and fabulists show that during his reign writers who attacked official corruption, the vices and vanities of the court, and the cruel treatment of serfs, had very wide limits allowed them for their satire, which, moreover, was not the satire of pleasantry, but that of indignation and wrath.

The censorship was certainly exercised with great severity under the Emperor Nicholas; in spite of which we have seen that a number of important reviews were started during his reign. The "Telegraph," in which Polevoi, under pretence of criticizing books, attacked the whole Russian system in the most bitter manner, was published from 1827 to 1834. The "Moscow Messenger" appeared in 1827; the "Library for General Reading," in 1835; the "Contemporary," in 1836; "National Annals," remarkable for its occidental tendencies, in 1838; and the "Muscovite," the organ of the Russo-Slavonian party, in 1841.

The direct aim of the censorship is, of course, the suppression of whatever may be injurious or disagreeable to the Russian government; but, severely exercised, it must necessarily interfere with the diffusion of all kinds of political, intellectual, and moral notions. An abstract truth, enunciated as such, would, even under the Nicholas *régime*, have passed unnoticed by the censor, though carrying with it a host of conclusions quite at variance with the existing system of Russia. "The little flies are caught, but the large ones break through the web." In fact, it is impossible for a censorship to keep down the thought of a whole nation. If the nation be one that does not think at all,—such as modern Italy, for instance, —the case is different; but otherwise the writers will be more determined and more ingenious than the policemen who are put to watch over them, and they will find a thousand means of communicating their ideas without using an expression that the government can find fault

with. "The lover," says Stendhal, "thinks oftener of obtaining his mistress than the husband does of guarding his wife; the prisoner thinks oftener of escaping from his prison than the gaoler does of keeping him safe within its walls. Therefore the lover and the prisoner should succeed." And so ought the writer against the censor. Something worse than a censorship exists in France; yet Guizot, Montalembert, and other eminent French writers, by means of remote allusions, ingenious comparisons, and implied contrasts, contrive to tell us what they think of the present lethargic life of their country, which at one time supplied all the Continent with ideas.

In Russia, all publications,—native or foreign,—books, journals, or reviews, are alike submitted to the censorship. As Russian authors must know tolerably well what the censor will and what he will not permit, it seems improbable that their actual writings should often be interfered with, whatever effect the existence of the office may have in causing them to withhold or modify the expression of their opinions. But on this point it is difficult to obtain precise information. All we can say is, that, judging from what actually appears, Russian authors and journalists seem to enjoy, on many points, far greater liberty of expression than is permitted to writers in France and Germany. The remarkable absence of news in Russian journals (properly so-called) can, in a great measure, be very naturally accounted for by the absence of journalists. The class which supplies so many writers and reporters to our newspapers, and which includes educated men without a profession, or with a profession but without practice (such as briefless barristers), has scarcely any existence in Russia, though it will doubtless grow up in time, and at last become too large, as is at present the case in England. It is not in political and social news alone that the Russian journals are deficient,—and this makes us think that the censorship is not alone answerable for their barrenness: the notices of musical and theatrical per-

formances, and of new books, are also of the most meagre kind; and to find any criticisms of value on politics, literature, or art, we must at once turn to the fortnightly reviews.

The comparative freedom with which foreign journals are admitted into Russia supports us in our opinion, that the country is without good newspapers not so much because there is a censor, as because there are no journalists. We say comparative freedom, because although you can subscribe at the post-office, in the two capitals and the chief provincial towns, to all the papers of importance published in England, France, or Germany, your journal sometimes reaches you adorned with black patches where printed characters should be seen. This is the work of the St. Petersburg censors, who, by means of a wood-block saturated with printers' ink, blacken either the whole of a column, or that portion of it which contains the article or paragraph objected to. A newspaper decorated all over with these black patches has a strange appearance. At first sight, and at a distance, it looks like some illustrated sheet; and a Russian gentleman, who showed us the first specimen we ever saw of an English journal mutilated in the manner we have described by the Russian censorship, said as he handed it to us, "This is our Russian Illustrated News."

At Moscow the censor does not deface, but obliterates in the true meaning of the word. With a preparation of gutta-percha and powdered glass he will cleanse and purify the *Times* of a paragraph, or *Punch* of a joke, in so neat a manner that not a vestige of printers' ink shall remain, nor even the slightest trace of the process by which it has been made to disappear. A journal which has thus been rubbed into propriety by the Moscow censorship has also a certain resemblance to an illustrated paper, but to one that is yet waiting for its illustrations. Can our readers imagine a proof of one of these sheets before the wood-blocks have been inserted in the "form,"—all type,

except in a few places where the engravings are to appear, and where for the present nothing but white paper is seen? Such is the exact appearance of a very obnoxious English newspaper after it has passed through the hands of the Moscow censorship. We speak here of English newspapers alone, because those of France and Germany are for the most part so perfectly harmless, that the most fastidious censor of the most despotic country imaginable would find it difficult to discover anything objectionable in their meek columns. The governments of the countries in which those journals are published have already taken their precautions on that head.

Indeed, the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, when it was not allowed to enter Prussia, was received in St. Petersburg and Moscow as regularly as ever. The Belgian journals, too, which are frequently stopped in Paris, are freely admitted into Russia. It is true that *Le Nord* is still to a great extent a Russian organ,* and that the *Indépendance Belge* prepares a special Russian edition, as—by way of justifying its title, we presume—it also prepares a special edition for France; but, on the whole, we may say that there is at least as much toleration for foreign journals in Russia as in any other part of the Continent; and it must be remembered that all over the Continent toleration is all that is accorded to them.

"You reproach us with our want of liberty," exclaims "Iscander," in the name of Russia, to the other continental states, "but are you yourselves free?"

If the great despotisms of Europe would condescend to take advice, they might fairly be recommended to show a little more mercy to one another. Russia has not yet quite learned the right to be so hard upon Austria and France; and the Emperor of the French should certainly remember that the Emperor of Austria is "a man and a brother." Between Napoleon III. and the Emperor Alexander there

* Nevertheless, we have occasionally seen a paragraph blotted, or rubbed out even, in *Le Nord*.

is, however, this difference, that while the great object of one is to give liberty to serfs, that of the other is to reduce a nation which once was free to a condition of slavery.

If such a thing could be procured, how interesting it would be to see an English newspaper, containing the ordinary amount of continental news, after it had passed through the hands of all the censors in Europe! Russia will always admit articles that are merely obnoxious to France, and France makes a point of returning the compliment to Russia, and this in spite of the supposed friendship between the two governments; but if Russia, Prussia, Austria, Naples, and France would blot out of any given journal those particular portions which each might consider injurious or insulting to itself,—why, what a terrible blank there would be at last under the head of "Foreign Intelligence!"

We must do the Russian censors the justice to say, that they pay no attention to articles in which Russia is attacked in general terms, however severe, or even ill-founded, the accusations may be. For instance, in October 1856, a number of leaders on the great railway scheme appeared in the *Morning Post*, in which Russia was abused in no measured terms. These arrived untouched in Moscow. The leaders on the same subject in the *Times* also passed without the slightest rub. We remember, too, reading extracts from Mr. Sala's "Journey due North" in a number of *Galignani's Messenger* which had passed without any erasure through the censor's hands.

Speaking of *Galignani's Messenger*, we are reminded that, on looking through a collection of *Galignanis*, received through the post during the war, we met with a copy that had appeared just after the news of the battle of Inkermann reached London. This journal was full of articles and correspondents' letters, extracted from the various London morning papers. It gave the original

version of the numbers engaged (afterwards modified in the official reports), together with full particulars of the religious and alcoholic exaltation, treachery, &c., of the enemy,—in short, the first accounts of a great and dearly-bought triumph, written in the heat of the moment. All this could be read in Russia as it was read in Paris and in London.

"What *does* the censor suppress, then?" the reader will ask. In the first place, he never suppresses an entire newspaper, like the dishonest censors of France, who will coolly appropriate your *Times*, if the journal happens to state that the weather has been bad in Paris, when it is the supposed interest of the Emperor to make the world believe that the sun has been shining. The stated functions of the censor in Russia consist in the prohibition and suppression of "all works written in a spirit hostile to the orthodox Greek Church, or containing anything that is contrary to the truths of the Christian religion, or subversive of good manners or morality: all publications tending to assail the inviolability of autocratical monarchical power and the fundamental laws of the empire, or to diminish the respect due to the imperial family; all productions containing attacks on the honour or reputation of any one by improper expressions, by the publication of circumstances relating to domestic life, or by calumny of any kind whatever." Perhaps we cannot exemplify the action of the Russian censorship better than by mentioning those articles on the subject of Russia that have been suffered to remain intact, and those that have been "illustrated" by means of the censorial wood-block in three successive numbers of the *Times* (January 5th, 6th, 7th, 1857), received through the post-office at St. Petersburg.

One of these contains a letter from the "Hertfordshire Incumbent," on Russia's supposed designs upon British India. Beyond calling Russia a "housebreaker," there

is nothing offensive in the communication, and the censor has not interfered with it.

The second exhibits a column and a half of solid black, which has been thrown like a funereal pall over a letter of Mr. Russell's from Toula. Here nothing is said against the orthodox Greek Church, nor against the fundamental laws of the empire; but the *Times'* correspondent asserts —and, what is worse, proves—that the firearms of Toula are very inferior to those of Birmingham and Liège; and he also states, on the authority of an Englishman he had met at an hotel, that Russia was very nearly exhausted by the war when peace was made. Oddly enough, this letter, like all the others written by the same gentleman from Russia, found its way intact to Moscow.

The third number gives a full report of Sir Robert Peel's celebrated speech on Russia, which was not only "hostile to the Greek Church," but which also "tended to diminish the respect due to the imperial family," and, moreover, contained "attacks on the honour and reputation" of at least two persons, to say nothing of "calumny." The St. Petersburg censor, who appears to do his work rather coarsely, simply blotted out this extraordinary oration, but it could be read in Moscow in several newspapers; among others, in *Galignani's Messenger*, and in the *Illustrated London News*, and, therefore, in all probability in the *Times* itself. Two paragraphs, however, were erased. In one of these the facetious baronet gives a burlesque account of the empress kneeling down to kiss the relics in the Cathedral of the Assumption when the coronation was about to be celebrated. In the other he pays a tribute to the hospitality of Prince Orloff, and then coolly adds that his host was one of the murderers of the Emperor Paul; the fact being, that the present minister of that name does not belong to the old Orloff family at all.

We must mention, that journals and books addressed

to the professors of the Universities are delivered to them without being submitted to the censorship, and that since the accession of the Emperor Alexander the general functions of the censor have been exercised with far less rigour than formerly. We have found it quite impossible to obtain a list of books that were prohibited under Nicholas, but, among others, we are told that Macaulay's History was not openly admitted, though it could, nevertheless, with a little trouble, be procured. At present it can be purchased freely at any of the foreign booksellers in Russia, as can all works of general literature—English, French, or German. We may mention in particular, that all the Tauchnitz editions of English authors, including the Leipsic reprint of *Household Words*, are offered publicly for sale. In this collection, Carlyle's "French Revolution" is found—a book which one certainly would not have expected to meet with in Russia.

As regards the publication of Russian works, it may interest our readers to hear that a society for printing books for the lower classes was formed about two years since in Moscow, and that two of the first brought out were "Dred" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

We might here speak of a whole class of literature which was once peculiar to Russia, but which, since the re-establishment of the empire, has also made its appearance in France. We allude to compositions that have either been forbidden by the censor, or have never even been submitted to him, and which have at the same time attained great celebrity, and enjoy a wide circulation—for the most part in manuscript. But of these productions we shall treat in another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

ILLUSTRATED PAPERS AND CARICATURES.

SOME time since we read in the columns of a London newspaper the following lines :—

"An illustrated paper and a satirical one, similar to *Punch*, are about to be started in St. Petersburg. These are hopeful signs."

Of course the sheet from which we quote the above, and which looks upon the promised publication of a picture-paper as a "hopeful sign," is itself an illustrated journal.

But there are signs which we imagine must be considered even more hopeful than the mere announcement of illustrated and satirical newspapers, namely, their actual existence. St. Petersburg, then, has rejoiced in the possession of a satirical journal for some years past; though we are bound to admit that until lately it was far more in the style of that fettered and manacled wit, the Paris *Charivari*, than of our free and independent jester, the London *Punch*. Russia has also its illustrated paper; and Mr. Timm's sketches in his weekly journal, entitled the *Artistic Sheet*, may be compared with the best that have ever appeared in the illustrated journals of London or Paris. The *Artistic Sheet* is lithographed, by which Mr. Timm gains this evident advantage, that his designs cannot fail to be given to the world with the impress of his style upon them, instead of being spoiled, as is occasionally the case with the productions of our newspaper artists, through being confided to unskilful, or worse still, unintelligent engravers. Considered as a journal of passing events, there is not a newsboy in London who would not laugh Mr. Timm's *Artistic Sheet* to scorn. In fact, it is

not passing, but passed events, that its able director chronicles and illustrates. His "Bombardment of Sveaborg," seen from the land, appeared some time after the fleet had left the Baltic; and by the time his retreat of the Russian army from the north to the south of Sebastopol had been published, the English and French journals were already getting up the portraits of the envoys to the Paris Conference. But we must add, that the march across the bridge of boats, when it did appear, was worthy of Raffet, to whose style that of Mr. Timm bears much resemblance; and the editor of the *Artistic Sheet* is probably of opinion that a thing is always done rapidly enough when it is done well. If this artist draws one subject better than another, it is the Russian soldier, in his long gray coat, with his thick projecting moustache, and his quiet, resolute look; and having a ready eye for character, he is of course very successful in his portraits, among which we remember in particuliar an admirable head of one of the most justly distinguished commanders of the late war, General Mouravieff. Of course, too, Mr. Timm, like every Russian who can use his pencil at all, has drawn scenes from the road; the road being to the Russian, in many respects, what the sea is to the Englishman; thus, to give but one instance, it supplies the heroes of all the popular songs, romances, and pictures, as in England our heroes and bold adventurers are almost invariably sailors.

As Mr. Timm could not have been one week in Finland, the next in Kars, and the third in Sebastopol, we imagine that, like our own pictorial editors, he depended on correspondents for his sketches, which in many cases must have merely served to suggest his lithographic pictures. The purely warlike scenes during the period of the invasion, were occasionally varied by groups of Georgians and Circassians, or by a piece of Crimean nature, such as the Bakhtchiserai with its "Fountain"; a name known to Russians chiefly by its beautiful legend, which

forms the subject of one of Poushkin's most popular poems. Indeed, from the Baltic to the Caucasus, the Russian artist finds a sufficient number of picturesque subjects, without even going beyond the confines of the Czar's European dominions. In course of time, as civilization spreads through Russia, the *Artistic Sheet* will of necessity be driven out of the field by some pictorial journal, which will publish engravings of important events soon after their occurrence,—so soon, that it will be suspected of having prepared them a little before. In the meanwhile it can scarcely be denied that Mr. Timm hastens rather too slowly. For instance, in September 1856, the coronation numbers of the *Illustrated News*, *Illustrated Times*, and the French *Illustration*, were to be seen every week at the reading-rooms of the Moscow clubs before the long series of fêtes had been actually brought to a conclusion; while Mr. Timm's *Artistic Sheet*, containing a panoramic representation of the imperial entry, did not appear until, even in Russia, the coronation had lost half its interest, and people were beginning to count how much money they had spent in rent, entertainments, and ball-dresses for their wives and daughters, during a fabulously extravagant period of about six weeks, when every week might be counted as an ordinary year. On the other hand, Mr. Timm's lithograph, when it did appear, was correct in every detail, which was not the case with any one of the wood engravings.

We have mentioned the fact that St. Petersburg possesses a comic journal. That sheet is not of any particular value; but we have no doubt that a good Russian *Punch* would obtain great success in St. Petersburg and Moscow. There could be no lack of satirical contributors, for the Russians have the faculty of observation developed above all others, and some of the greatest writers the country has produced have been satirists—for instance, Kriloff, whom a French writer is good enough to style the Russian Lafontaine, whereas he is, in fact, a

Russian Æsop; Gogol, the author of "Revisor;" and Griboiedoff, the author of "Gore ot Ouma;" while in the poetry of both Poushkin and Lermontoff a considerable admixture of the satirical element is found. As for caricatures, the print-shops, until shortly before the coronation, abounded with them. It is true that some few of these, relating to our conduct of the war, were mère facsimiles of the large cuts in *Punch;* for whenever that journal's attacks on the executive were particularly good, they were adopted by the Russians as applying to the country at large; so prevalent is the belief on the Continent that, owing to our representative system, the acts of the English administration may be regarded as those of the nation itself.

But the most interesting caricatures that appeared were those directed against the allies in general. It may be worth while, merely as a matter of popular history, to see what our enemies said of us at the time of the Anglo-French invasion in support of Turkish independence. As a general rule, it is difficult to see the point of a joke that tells against oneself; but now that the war is at an end we can afford to smile at the pleasantry of our opponents; viewing it after the philosophic manner of the goodnatured coalheaver, who, when submitting without a murmur to his wife's blows, used to remark, that it "amused her and did n't hurt *him.*"

One remarkable thing about these caricatures is the fact, that a far larger number of them were directed against England than against France; while Turkey was scarcely deemed worthy of insulting at all, except in some purely incidental manner, when the figure of a Turk was required for filling up a picture in which the foreground was occupied by her powerful allies. It seems to have been a favourite idea with the comic artists, and therefore, we presume, with the nation at large, that England was to gain some special benefit by the war. Thus, in one caricature founded on a familiar design, Turkey is

symbolized under the form of a cow, which Russia is pulling by the horns, and France by the tail; while England is quietly milking her. England, too, was made the subject of a special publication, entitled the "Mirror for Englishmen;" and in some tolerably effective lines, written to an engraving which was very popular at that critical period, when the declaration of war was expected every day, the leading part is distinctly assigned to "Albion." The engraving represented Lord Palmerston pointing to a map of Russia, and bullying the Sultan (almost the *rôle*, it will be observed, that Menschikoff played in our caricatures); Louis Napoleon is standing behind, and flourishing a sword which is evidently much too big for him; the Sultan seems at a loss what to do; while a Russian soldier, in his helmet and long gray coat, although preserving a stern silence and keeping quite aloof from the rest, wears a portentous frown, as if to indicate that really this sort of thing must not last much longer, or he will have to use his bayonet. The verses which accompany the design may be rendered almost literally as follows:

"'T is Palmerston the warlike!
With diplomatic skill
He conquers Russia on the map
According to his will.
Fired by the martial prowess
Of the ever-daring lord,
'*Allons, Courage!*' cries the Frenchman,
Waving high his uncle's sword.

"But pause before provoking
The laughter of all lands;
We 've seen that sword you 're waving,
And in somewhat better hands.
Is it likely, when your uncle
Fled from Russia in disgrace,
That you, his little nephew,
Will fare better in his place?

"'T is otherwise with Albion:
The engine of our land
Is one her scientific men
Have yet to understand.
To people all so practical,
How wonderful 't will seem
When we teach them what high-pressure means
Without the aid of steam!

"As of old this engine's ready,
And its might they 'll feel afar,
When three short words are uttered—
God, the Country, and the Czar!"

It may be observed, that, in or out of office, Lord Palmerston is always the representative of England. The Russians, one way and another, evidently think a great deal of him. They tell the strangest anecdotes about him, and have even paid him the compliment of bestowing his name on a fashionable great-coat! Mr. Urquhart, who proves regularly every week in a paper by no means generally known, that Lord Palmerston has for years past been nothing but an *employé* of the Russian Government, would be astonished to find how little that minister's services are appreciated in Russia itself, where the noble lord is perpetually abused by all classes of the community as the special enemy of Russia, and as an intriguer whose machinations may at any moment involve Europe in a fresh war! This is not merely the pretended belief of the military; it is the firm conviction of the mercantile classes, who in Russia, as in every other country, are in favour of peace at all price.

The Russian caricaturists had one evident advantage on their side. They could fairly represent the contest as a struggle of one against three, and finally of one against four; and every one who has been to Astley's, or who has seen a melodrama, or who has read one of Mr. Ainsworth's novels, knows that the value of

such a situation can scarcely be over-estimated. Unfortunately, too, there is reason to believe that this was the view taken of the war by many of the Eastern nations, who knew nothing about the numbers engaged on either side. All they heard was, that the Turks, though directed by such generals as Williams, Kmeti, and the unfortunate unappreciated General Guyon, were unable to hold Kars; while the Russians, threatened in the north and invaded in the south by the two most powerful nations in Europe, kept possession of Sebastopol in the face of four armies, and finally retreated in order to the north of the city.

However, when the city *was* taken, the caricatures prepared on the four-to-one principle naturally lost their point; otherwise, as long as the siege lasted, some of them were witty enough. For instance, a large pair of scales is seen. On one side is the Russian moujik, got up in the most national style; that is to say, with the coloured shirt worn over the trousers, the ends of the trousers tucked into the boots, round the waist a sash, on the head a narrow-brimmed, chimney-pot shaped, napless hat, and in the hand a stick of the shillaleh pattern. The moujik looks light, but he weighs a great deal; for all the French generals, English admirals, mercenary Sardinians, and unbelieving Turks who are placed against him by way of counterpoise, are unable to lift him an inch. In Russia, the ordinary weights used in large scales are shaped like cannon-balls with handles at the top; and the artist, profiting by this resemblance, shows the Allies throwing fresh weights, or fresh cannon-balls, into the scale, while the moujik still remains unmoved.

At the opening of the Crimean campaign, it seems to have been thought a good joke to treat the invasion as an impertinent intrusion on the part of three ill-behaved boys. "Be off!" cries the moujik, with his eternal stick in his hand; but unfortunately the boys would not go until the two big ones had taken what they wanted.

When an army is defeated, it is a favourite practice in all countries to lay the entire blame on the generals. The "disaster" is attributed to accidental causes, and proves nothing against the strength and courage of the nation at large. Next time the losers may have a good general, and then they will become the winners, &c. One nation will sometimes yield to another the palm of skill, but never that of bravery—the quality that cannot be acquired. Thus no country in Europe denies that Napoleon was the greatest general of his time; but each one has been taught to believe that its own soldiers are unequalled in personal daring, each is instructed that its soldiers alone can use the bayonet. M. Christian Ostroffsky, the French translator of Miçkieviçz, informs us in his preface that he was encouraged to attack the difficulties of his subject by recalling the words of commander some one, who used to cry out to the something or other of the line, "*Polonais, à la baionette!*" The author of the critical narrative, published in English* under the title of the "Russian Account of the Battle of Inkermann," boasts that the Russian soldiers, arriving after a long march, without rifles, and with arms of inferior quality, nevertheless charged the English up the hill; and he adds, that the English, until then, were convinced that no nation dare meet them with the bayonet, which, however, had been the favourite weapon of the Russians since the time of Souvaroff. Certainly it was with the bayonet that Souvaroff drove the French out of Italy; and it is notorious that the latter could never resist the English bayonet-charges in the Peninsula; but do the French—the inventors of the arm in question—consider that they are less capable of using it than other nations—our own, for instance? Let us turn to any French book in which the capabilities of the French soldier happen to be treated of. Here is an old number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, taken almost at random, which contains an article on the

* By Murray.

Prince de Joinville's celebrated pamphlet. The introduction of steam into naval warfare, says the writer, will have the effect of rendering more frequent those hand-to-hand encounters, *in which the French have always had so marked a superiority* ("*ces combats à l'arme blanche dans lesquelles les Français ont toujours eu une supériorité si marquée!*").

The soldiers, then, of all nations are invincible; but sometimes bad generalship causes one body of invincibles to be beaten by another. It was in this way that the Russians lost Alma and Inkermann—so at least say the Russian caricatures. One of these represents a council of war, at which the allied commanders are present. A cargo of Minié rifles has just arrived, and they are about to be distributed to the troops. The question is, what special instructions shall be issued to the soldiers respecting their use. Shall they fire at the rank-and-file, pick off the regimental officers, or aim at the generals? "For Heaven's sake, don't let them injure any of the generals!" says one of the allies, who has discovered the supposed incapacity of the Russian leaders; and thereupon an order is drawn up in the following words: "Any soldier of the allied army who fires at a Russian general will be shot." This design is also remarkable as exhibiting a greater amount of license than one would have expected a caricaturist to enjoy in Russia.

We have had the pleasure of seeing a Russian caricature of which the general condition of England is the subject. John Bull, in his customary top-boots, is represented as a very large man, living in a very small island, where he appears to have no room to turn. The surface of the island is marked out like a map, and in a manner that will not allow us to suppose for an instant that the academicians of St. Petersburg had any thing to do with it. It is divided into three parts, entitled "Oxford, Cambridge, and Leinster," and is so small as to appear quite lost in the vast ocean which surrounds it. The

notion that the great want of England is a want of land, is a very popular one in Russia, where land is so plentiful in proportion to the population, that no proprietor thinks of reckoning his fortune by his acres, but only by the number of peasants he can put to cultivate them. "In England," says an amusing character in a recent Russian comedy, "there are so many inhabitants and so little land, that one man is constantly pushing up against another. The push is returned. This one has recourse to his fists, that one retaliates; and thus the terrible art of boxing has originated."

Of course the eccentric admiral of the Baltic fleet was too tempting a figure to be neglected by a comic artist. It was in the north that the hard fighting was expected. In the Crimea, not a single soldier of the guard made his appearance, though numerous officers of that corps served on the staff. Most of the cavalry of the guard were in Poland; but the infantry were in St. Petersburg, or at the ports of the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland. When Sir Charles, in the style of Mr. Bland of burlesque notoriety, told his sailors to "sharpen their cutlasses," more than one family was frightened out of St. Petersburg. At one time, before the second channel was blocked up, the unexpected appearance of some of the English steamers led to a report that Cronstadt had narrowly escaped being taken; and certainly no one ever imagined that it would not be attacked. It has now been clearly shown, that in engaging the Cronstadt batteries the gallant officer would have placed himself between two fires—that of the Russians and that of the Admiralty at home; but however this may have been, the inhabitants of St. Petersburg were not sorry when they found that every day the defences of Cronstadt were being strengthened, while the probabilities of an attack of course diminished in a corresponding degree. After a certain time, it became evident that Sir Charles was not the ogre he had represented himself to be; and finally, when the sailing-season was at an end, and the

sharpener of cutlasses had captured an immense number of fishing-boats, the Russians ventured upon a caricature in which the English admiral was exhibited with an enormous fish under his arm, about to present the spoils of the Baltic Sea to the British parliament.

From the very commencement of the alliance between France and England for the protection of Turkey, Russia asserted—the wish being, of course, father to the assertion—that such a union could never lead to any practical result. In illustration of this idea, a swan, a crab, and a pike, each in its own way a water-animal, were represented in the act of drawing a load—or rather of attempting to do so, for the load remains stationary. Beneath the engraving was printed the fable (by Kriloff) from which the notion was taken, and which we here endeavour to reproduce in English:

"THE SWAN, THE CRAB, AND THE PIKE.

"When comrades cannot agree,
They may toil as much as they like,
The work won't proceed;
And such folks should take heed
By the fate of the wonderful three—
The Swan, the Crab, and the Pike.

"The Pike, the Crab, and the Swan
A union suddenly formed.
A load they saw
And wished to draw;
So to friendship rapidly warmed.
Into harness they went,
And their energies spent,
But the wagon-load did n't move on.

"And yet the load was no great weight;
But Pike into the water full,
And Swan into the heavens straight,
And backwards Crab the cart would pull,

Which was right and which was wrong,
I really can't pretend to say;
But this I know—they laboured long,
And the load stands still to the present day."

Towards the close of the war there was an end to joking; and the popular engravings seem to have consisted principally of representations of atrocities alleged to have been perpetrated by English sailors in the Gulf of Finland, and of the havoc that was certainly committed at Kertch. The French *émeutiers* of 1848, in the Palace of the Tuileries, set an example which armies, priding themselves on their discipline, are sometimes unable to follow. That the destruction of the Kertch Museum should have taken place, in spite of the officers' exertions to restrain the men, seems to show, that in every war some deeds may be done of which all reasonable and honest persons will afterwards be ashamed. But the English people are no more answerable for the conduct of certain regiments at Kertch, than the Russians, as a nation, are for the Hango massacre.

On the other hand, there were actions performed during the late war, on each side, of which both Russia and the allies may well preserve the memory. Several of the English officers who were prisoners in Russia have made a point of relating to the world what treatment *they* received during their residence in the enemy's country; and a number of the Russian prisoners detained on *parole* at Lewes expressed, after their return to their native land, in a letter which found its way to the newspapers, their gratitude for the kindness and hospitality they had met with in that town. The French, as we all know, vied with one another in their attention to their prisoner-guests.

War is indeed a terrible scourge when, to the bloodshed and the tears, there are no counterbalancing results, and when the signing of peace leaves nations

where the declaration of hostilities had found them,—full of hatred and the spirit of misrepresentation and calumny. In the case of England and Russia, whether or not it be desirable that there should be an intimate political connection, there can be no reason why there should not be a much better understanding between the two countries. Of all the nations on the Continent, there is none which merits our sympathy so much as our late enemy, in the attitude he has recently assumed. There is not another country in Europe, except England, which criticizes so freely and so vigorously its own internal affairs, and none which at the present moment takes so much interest in ours.

CHAPTER IV.

SECRET LITERATURE.

Mr. Ivan Golovin, in his amusing but not trustworthy book entitled *La Russie sous Nicolas I.*, tells an anecdote which, to say the least, is *ben trovato*, on the subject of Sir Robert Peel's anxiety to obtain an advantageous treaty of commerce with Russia.

When the late Emperor visited London, he met with no very cordial reception from the populace, and on one occasion, while riding out with the great apostle of Free Trade (according to Mr. Golovin), was actually hissed by the mob. Turning to Sir Robert Peel, he said,

"I have to thank your newspapers and their calumnies for this."

"No," replied the minister, "our people are very intelligent, and what they are now hissing is the Russian tariff."

The answer was both clever and courteous, and altoge-

ther it is a pity that in all probability it was never uttered. But at the same time it would have required a very favourable tariff to have effaced from the memory of the English the names of Pestal and Poland. Some vague notions and misconceptions in connection with the conspiracy of 1825, the Polish insurrection of 1830, the nuns of Minsk, Siberia, the spy system, and secret tribunals—these were certainly the causes of the hisses, if hisses there were. To many persons, it is true, the name of Pestal is known only from a vapid, commonplace waltz, of which some unscrupulous music-publisher has declared him to be the composer—just as the misfortunes of Poland were for a long time intimately associated with an annual ball at the Mansion House. But, on the whole, the Emperor Nicholas may have been right in attributing his alleged unfavourable reception when he appeared in the streets to what (according to Mr. Golovin) he was pleased to call the "calumnies" of the journals; only it was not in England that the calumnies were invented. No travellers are more truthful than the English. None take so much trouble to ascertain facts, and in describing their personal experiences none, as a rule, care so little for self-display. But the great majority of our supposed facts concerning Russia have not been obtained either directly or indirectly from English sources. Most of our Russian news, nearly all that which finds its way into our journals, comes to us either from Germany, or from Poland through Germany—that is to say, from a country which hates Russia, though one which fears it. Add to this that the Austrian newspapers and those, like the "Augsburg Gazette," under Austrian influence, represent the Latin Church—which, among Jesuits, means misrepresenting the Greek—and it will not be difficult to understand how so many false and exaggerated stories of Russian tyranny and persecution have reached England. It is only now and then that such tales, by their very monstrosity, provoke examination in the country where the infamies they record

are alleged to have taken place, and in those cases the correction or contradiction never finds its way so far as the original calumny has done. Thus, of the thousands who have heard the story of the "Nuns of Minsk," few are aware that M. de Gerebtzoff, governor of the province of Minsk, having been instructed by the Emperor to inquire into the affair, could only report that the nuns named by the Augsburg paper had never existed, that there had been no persecution, and that the whole history was without foundation—a conclusion at which the Rev. Mr. Blackmore, English minister at Cronstadt, who took great trouble to inquire into the facts of the case, also arrived. Another "calumny" from Poland, of almost equal importance, was imported into the columns of the English journals about a year since, and was shown to be false, a fortnight afterwards, by the contents of a letter from the St. Petersburg correspondent of the "Times." Since the accession of the present Emperor great efforts have been made to improve not only the material, but also the moral and mental condition of the Russian peasants. Associations for printing cheap books, reading clubs, and additional schools have been established; and temperance societies have been formed in various parts of the empire. These temperance societies, some of which included whole "communes," that is to say, entire villages, had the natural effect of diminishing the profits of the "brandy farmers," who purchase from the Crown the exclusive right of selling spirits. The "farmers" were indignant, and petitioned the Government to suppress the associations; a request with which, according to one of the Polish journals, the Government, for the sake of its spirit revenue, actually complied. This assertion agreed with the well-known and absurd tale about drunkenness being encouraged in Russia for the pecuniary advantage of the State, and more than one English journal commented in a becoming tone of contemptuous severity on the alleged edict of suppression. The "Saturday Review,"

convinced of the good intentions of Alexander II., seemed at a loss to understand the affair, and explained it, with something like reasonableness, by assuming that the temperance societies had been put down by corrupt intriguing officials, without the sanction or knowledge of the Emperor. The "Times'" correspondent, however, in his second letter from St. Petersburg, without referring to the Polish account of the matter, simply mentioned that petitions had been addressed by the brandy farmers to the Imperial Government, praying for the dissolution of the associations, and then subjoined the answer, which was the only one possible, and which set forth that in the interest of sobriety, good morals, and the comfort of the peasant, everything must be done to encourage the societies petitioned against. Now, if the "Times" had not had a correspondent in St. Petersburg in August, 1859, its readers might have believed not only that the Government persecuted religion, but that it would not even tolerate sobriety. A series of letters from some accredited correspondent in Russia would, doubtless, have the effect of rectifying many misconceptions that are now entertained in England with regard to both the Government and the people of that empire; for it is a remarkable fact, that whereas nearly all the books written against Russia are signed by foreigners, the great majority of English travellers who have visited the country have spoken of it favourably —by comparison very favourably indeed. The French, so admirable as critics and narrators, are not equally happy in collecting facts. Wherever they go, they are sure to bring back capital stories, and to generalize very cleverly from minute incidents, but there is reason to believe that their tourists sometimes assume a sort of traveller's licence to represent what they have only heard as that which they have actually seen, and to make themselves the heroes of all the stray anecdotes that have reached them.*

* This is the only polite way of explaining the misstatements of

On the other hand, some of our authors visiting Russia, and finding how many accusations against the Russian Government are unfounded, appear—and by a very natural reaction—to have concluded that not one of them is based on fact. Travellers in Siberia, above all, seem to have been particularly struck by the humane treatment of political prisoners detained there. Mr. Hill ("Travels," &c.) ridicules the notion of their being subjected to any hardships, and finds them living pleasantly (as he appears to think) in elegant, well-furnished cottages. Mr. Cotterill, who visited Siberia in 1842 ("Recollections of Siberia," &c.), takes upon himself "to assert and defy contradiction, that there is not at this moment in any part of Russia one single human being working in the mines by order of Government for political offences. . . . . Did delicacy not forbid, we could mention," he adds, "some great names now under sentence of banishment in Siberia, of whose guilt the most liberal cannot deny the blackness, or the justice of the condemnation, whose state, except that they are precluded from returning to St.

M. de Custine about Russia, and of a variety of French travellers concerning Great Britain. What are we to say, for instance, of M. Feuillet de Conches, who, in a respectable French journal, *Le Musée des Familles*, describes a fight, which he pretends to have seen in Ireland, between an English and an Irish boxer? The contest, he assures us, was regarded as between the representatives of adverse nationalities. The Irishman, to begin with, put the Englishman's eyes out, but the blind son of Albion would not give in. Then, as he would not confess himself beaten, the conqueror dug his thumbs into his enemy's chest, tore his bosom open, and disembowelled him. "This," adds the French tourist, "was not seen by me alone, but by ten thousand spectators." Compare with the above M. de Custine's story of the Emperor Nicholas calling an aide-de-camp to him and running a sword through his foot, that he might convince some distinguished foreigner of the perfect submission of his officers. This, it is true, M. de Custine does not claim to have witnessed; but he pretends to have seen and heard other things equally monstrous which it has been *clearly shown* he did not see and did not hear.—(See "Quarterly Review," No. 146.)

Petersburg and their homes, is, in every respect, as comfortable as it can be." Here we are not only told that exile to Siberia is not so black as it is painted, but also that the insurrection of 1825 was undoubtedly a criminal affair. Of this latter way of thinking, too, was Dr. Pinkerton, one of the agents of the Bible Society. "The conspirators," he says, in his well-known volume, "who were at that time forming diabolical plans against the peace of the empire, took also the greatest pains to misrepresent to the Government the character and labours of the friends of religion and of Bible institutions, and this for the purpose of turning its attention from themselves and from their own wicked revolutionary designs." Other travellers, Germans as well as Englishmen, have defended and justified the partition of Poland on the simple ground that through Warsaw lay the high road to Moscow; and Archdeacon Coxe, writing immediately after the iniquitous act, explains how Catherine, being engaged in fighting the Turks, was obliged against her will to consent to the division of territory proposed by Frederick of Prussia. Between these accusations and justifications put forward by foreign writers, it may be interesting to see what the Russians themselves think of the Polish question, of Siberia, and of the insurrection of 1825. On subjects such as the above, we cannot expect to find any free opinions expressed in the public journals and magazines; though it is only in countries where there is absolutely no thinking that the censor can effectually check the expression of thought, and the Russians find means to communicate to one another their opinions on every subject, either indirectly and by subtle allusions in print, or directly and in a straightforward manner in manuscript. The misdeeds of officials, and the general corruption which is found in almost all branches of the State service, may be attacked openly, and with a freedom that would never be tolerated in Germany or France; but it would not be permitted, except quite incidentally, to speak of the

wrongs of Poland, the horrors of Siberian exile, or the impolicy or injustice of any war in which the country happened to be engaged. To show how far liberty of the press is understood or misunderstood even now in Russia, we may mention that, since the decision of the reigning Emperor has been made known in connection with the serf question, not a word has been allowed to appear in print against the proposed emancipation—we say allowed, because it is quite certain that many proprietors object to it, and have plausible reasons to urge against it, which, under an open system, would be publicly expressed. The Russian journals and reviews of the present day do not, then, reflect the opinions of the entire country about the great change which is now being prepared, inasmuch as the minority, small as it may be, is not represented at all. Nor can we ascertain from any printed journals or books what the Russian opposition (so to speak) think of the treatment of Poland, of the conspiracy of 1825, of the conduct of the Crimean war, and of other matters intimately allied with the personal credit of Russian sovereigns. But each of these subjects has its secret literature; and, from an examination of some of the most remarkable and most widely-circulated specimens, we can find out what view a certain number of Russians take of those questions which have been so differently judged by the enemies and friends of Russia in the West of Europe.

At the end of the Crimean war, the number of songs brought back by the army from Sebastopol was prodigious. Naturally, these were not songs of triumph. The fate of the soldiers, who died unnoticed in thousands, was contrasted with that of the generals, who received decorations and the thanks of the Emperor for losing battles. It was set forth how the Russian army was sent first against the Turks without success; that then the Allies came, and they were told that their generals would lead them against the invaders and drive them into the sea; how the invaders

would not go into the sea; how fresh generals were appointed, and how each in succession proved himself incapable. Some of these songs were known throughout the army, others were confined to particular divisions, and it is quite certain that the generals knew them as well as the soldiers. We have been told by officers who had served in the Crimea that these compositions were sung on the line of march by entire regiments, and that the superior officers appeared never to hear them, while the subalterns doubtless enjoyed them as much as any one. The authorship of some of these is attributed to a celebrated writer who was with the army in Sebastopol, but the great majority of them were composed by the soldiers themselves, and the best effusion of the kind was known to be the work of a private of Osten Sacken's corps. In this last production there is a couplet for each general. The German commanders are spoken of with detestation; and one who is perpetually making the sign of the cross, is said to be the worst of all. The general belief of the Russian soldiers appears to have been that they were badly led—the fact being that they had only to complain of being badly fed and infamously armed. But with these questions we have nothing to do.

As regards Poland, though Russia was the only one of the three partitioning powers that had the shadow of a pretext for seizing Polish territory, and though the destruction of her old enemy may have been to Russia something like a political necessity, we do not think there are many Russians who would attempt to justify in all respects the compact between Frederick, Catherine, and Maria Theresa. The inscription on the commemorative monument at Borodino records laconically that "Napoleon entered Moscow, 1812," and then that "Alexander entered Paris, 1814;" and in a similar manner the Russians might urge that their occupation of Warsaw was effected in the way of reprisal for that of Moscow. It is a fact that in the year 1612 the Russia of Rurik and

of Ivan IV. was partitioned by the Swedes (at Novgorod) and the Poles (at Moscow). The Russians remember this, and also that from 1612 Russia never ceased to fight Sweden and Poland until she had gained security, and at last a positive ascendancy over both, and from the latter had reconquered Kieff, her ancient religious capital, and various provinces which had been wrested from her while she was still groaning beneath the Tartar yoke. But it is also known that Poland, since its subjection, has been cruelly persecuted and humiliated; that its patriots taken in arms have been treated not like political prisoners, but like convicts; that Russian has been substituted for Polish as the official language; that the museums and galleries of Warsaw have been emptied to enrich St. Petersburg with their contents; and that the country has been overrun with soldiers and spies. We have heard Russians frankly admit all this; and officers who have been quartered in Warsaw have assured us that it was impossible for them, or for any one wearing the Russian uniform, to get admitted into Polish society. We do not think the Russians, that is to say educated Russians, detest the Poles (the peasants hate them with an old traditional hatred), and it is certain that the most liberal of the Russian writers have frequently expressed their sympathy for them. "May my arm wither and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I say aught against the Poles having a separate throne!" exclaims Mr. Ogareff in a volume of poems published last year in London. "All their trophies have been taken from them, their kings' gardens and palaces have been given into the hands of miserable satraps, and nothing remains to them but to groan helplessly. No, my neighbours, I am not your enemy. Like you I love freedom, and have sworn to sacrifice to it. I salute a suffering people as my brothers. With tears, O sons of Poland, as a man and as a Slavonian, I behold your severe misfortunes." The above lines could scarcely have been printed in Russia. Far

less could the following, which we believe have never been printed at all, but which are as well known in St. Petersburg and Moscow as any in the Russian language. The poem, which we have translated word by word, is the work of the Countess Rostopchin, daughter-in-law of the celebrated Governor-General of Moscow, who wrote the facetious "Memoirs of my Life, composed in Ten Minutes," and who is the reputed author of the fire of 1812. The Countess Rostopchin was living in Paris when she wrote it. It was forwarded in manuscript to Moscow, and in a very short time was copied and recopied, and obtained such an extensive circulation that one of the Government organs felt called upon to publish a reply. Here, to begin with, are the original verses on Poland, which the Emperor Nicholas loved as George IV. loved his bride.

THE BARON AND HIS WIFE; OR, THE FORCED MARRIAGE.

A KNIGHTLY BALLAD.

THE BARON.

Attend, ye servants and vassals,
To your gentle master's call;
Judge, without fear of my anger,
For I am ready to hear the truth.
Judge of the quarrel known to you all.
Though I am powerful and renowned,
Though I am omnipotent here,
I am powerless at home;
For ever disobedient
Is my troublesome wife.

I saw her an orphan,
And took her all ruined,
And, with my mighty hand,
Gave her my protection.
I dressed her in brocade and gold,
I surrounded her with an innumerable guard,

And, lest the enemy should lure her,
I stand over her myself with a dagger.
Yet dissatisfied and melancholy
Is my ungrateful wife.

I know that with her complaints
She brands me everywhere.
I know that before all the world
She curses my shelter and my sword.
She looks askance from beneath her brows,
And repeats a false clatter;
Prepares vengeance, sharpens the knife,
Kindles the fire of domestic war.
She whispers with the monks,
My deceitful wife!

Contented and rejoiced
My enemies look on,
And foster her factious anger,
And flatter her busy, restless pride.
Give me just counsel,
And judge which of us is right.
My tongue is severe, but not deceitful.
Now listen to the disobedient one;
Let her defend herself,
My guilty wife!

THE WIFE.

Am I his slave or his companion?
That God knows! Was it I that chose
A cruel husband for myself?
Did I take the vow?
I lived free and happy,
And I loved my freedom;
But I was conquered and made captive
By my wicked neighbour's bloody invasion.
I am betrayed, I am sold,
I am a prisoner and not a wife!

In vain the cruel yoke
The seigneur thinks to gild.
In vain my holy revenge
He seeks to change into love.
I need not his generosity,
Nor do I want his protection.
And I myself can teach the meddlesome
To pay me, peaceably, the tribute of respect.
By him alone am I humbled.
I am his enemy and not his wife.

He forbids me to speak
In my own native tongue;
And will not allow me to sign
With my inherited coat of arms.
Before him I may take no pride
In my ancient name,
Nor pray in my ancestors' eternal church:
A religion not her own
His unhappy wife is forced to adopt.

He has sent into exile, into imprisonment,
All the truest and best of my servants,
And has given me over into persecution
To his slaves and spies.
Shame, persecution, and slavery
Are the wedding-gifts he brought to me;
And is it I he forbids to murmur,
And am I, suffering such a fate,
To hide it from every one,
—I, a wife against my will?

The Countess Rostopchin's verses had so much success that, as we have said, they were honoured with a reply, which appeared in the St. Petersburg "Northern Bee," August 23, 1843. Every one in Russia who takes an interest in literature is acquainted with "The Baron's Address to his Vassals," and either possesses a copy of

the poem, or knows where to procure it. So at least it appeared to us; but we were glad to find that it was not so easy to obtain "The Vassals' Answer to the Baron." The reply is, indeed, a strange specimen of brutality and sycophancy, and is, in all respects, worthy of the reputation enjoyed by the journal which published it. The editor of this newspaper, Boulgarin (with whom is associated Gretsch, the author of several grammatical works, and of one of the replies to De Custine), has contrived, somehow or other, to get his name introduced into a number of French, English, and German books on Russia, and is usually described therein as one of the brightest ornaments of Russian literature. His own countrymen, however, regard him as rather a smart journalist, but an utter disgrace to journalism. In the conversation and writings of Russians, whatever differences they may express on other points, there is a wonderful unanimity concerning the editor of the "Northern Bee." Persons of literary taste despise him for having depreciated the works of the greatest Russian poets, and for his affectation of a French style of composition. Mr. Herzen accuses him and his partner of having joined the conspirators of 1825, and afterwards, when the insurrectionary movement had failed, of assassinating the compositor who had set up a revolutionary placard they had prepared, and taking part against their former associates. M. de Gerebtzoff, absolutist as he is, has too much self-respect to have a word to say in favour of absolutism's hired and unscrupulous advocate. Boulgarin, he tells us, in his "History of Civilization in Russia," "is a journalist, and, above all, a *feuilletoniste.* In this career he has made himself so many enemies, that, from Poushkin to the present day, no one has accorded him the least talent, and it has been thought *mauvais genre* to say any good of 'this Zoilus' (it is thus that his detractors style him) . . . . His fecundity is extraordinary, and the most bitter criticisms, and even diatribes directed against

him personally, have had no effect upon him." This "Zoilus," upon whom the most bitter criticisms, and the most personal diatribes, have no effect, was once dismissed by Poushkin in an *impromptu*, of which the following is a free version. "Boulgarin," we must premise, is the Russian for "Bulgarian":—

"Be a Tartar, Pole, or Russian,
Frenchman, Englishman, or Prussian,
Spaniard, Portuguese, Hungarian,
— Anything but base Bulgarian."

In fact, no one but a few tourists, who have chanced to get introduced to him in St. Petersburg, without knowing anything about him, have had a word to say in favour of this man. He it is who, if he did not actually write the following verses, was, at all events, not ashamed to admit them into the journal which he edited. Doubtless, he even gloried in their publication:—

THE VASSALS' REPLY TO THE BARON.

I.

We are chosen, Baron, by you
To judge conscientiously
Between yourself and your deceitful wife.
If it please you we will speak.
Her family we are all acquainted with,
And we all know of her doings.
She never was virtuous,
And was unable to live at home;
And it does not astonish us now
That the woman should talk insolently.

II.

They were three sisters when they lived
Together in their own family. Then how many times
They were sold under the hammer
To empty lovers for an hour!
With such a life is it astonishing

That lawful marriage is not for them?
What is a husband to them but a constant enemy?
To be free from the marriage tie is their ideal of liberty.
Therefore it does not astonish us now
That the empty woman should scream.

III.

To the wild screams of the silly coquette
You should not listen, Baron.
You have other dutiful ones,
And, without her, many wives.
Put on your gauntlet of power,
And pat her while she is quiet;
But when she makes the least noise,
Then chastise the young person well,
And it will not astonish any one
If the woman is instantly silent.

IV.

Whether you are a slave or a companion,
The question is not difficult to decide.
You are a wife, if your husband
You will obey and love;
A slave if, again, injudiciously
You throw yourself into the midst of tumult,
Forgetting the lesson you have already received.
Then chains are ready for you,
And it will not astonish any one
If the Baron should crush you.

V.

Unjustly and hypocritically
You say that you were sold.
But into the hands of the Baron not once alone
You were given up by victory.
War decided your fate.

Remember now how many times
You showed mercy to us?
But, apparently, your strength did not last;
Therefore it does not astonish any one
That you should have lost credit.

VI.

Now, who forbids you to chatter
In your own native tongue?
And who forbids you to pray
In the temples of your ancestors?
No one. You chatter nonsense
At the dictation of foreign writers,
Your faithless friends.
Chatter; pray; but keep quiet,
And then it will not astonish any one
If the Baron should pardon you.

VII.

But it was not the wife who wrote those verses,
It was a poet in a cap who wrote them.
She has no small talent,
But, unfortunately, she is without sense.
It is not worth while to be angry with her,
Nor even to talk to her,
But simply to threaten her with the finger,
And order her to return;
And it will not astonish any one
If the Baron should pardon her.

The Countess Rostopchin sympathizes with Poland in her misfortunes, and, led away by her poetic enthusiasm, colours rather highly some of her charges against Russia: as in the lines,—

> "A religion not her own
> His unhappy wife is forced to adopt."

And again, to some extent, in these,—

"He forbids me to speak
In my own native tongue,"

it being, however, quite true that Russian was at that time the *official* language of Russian Poland,* as the German is even now of the Austrian and Prussian provinces. Poland, be it observed, has not said a word, and yet to the Countess's indignant lines, privately circulated, the journalist of St. Petersburg can only reply by publishing in his semi-official paper a collection of scandalous insults and outrages upon the Poles, who have not only not provoked them, but cannot possibly answer them. The savage plea that war decided the fate of Poland, and the equally barbarous argument contained in these lines,

"Remember now how many times
You showed mercy to us,"

are, nevertheless, the only approximations to justification that can be found in the poem. The rest is made up entirely of calumnies and threats. The final stanza addressed to the Countess is worthy of the preceding ones. The Baron *did* order the "poet in a cap" to return, and actually pardoned her; that is to say, he did not send her to Siberia or imprison her; but he would not allow her to travel any more in the direction of the West.

If the Russians, at all events the reflecting portion of them, are not insensible to the calamities of Poland, neither is it true that they regard the unfortunate leaders of the insurrection of 1825 as vulgar cut-throat revolutionists, or that they look upon the horrors of Siberian exile as calmly and complacently as those English travellers who are surprised to find that Russian political prisoners are not treated like galley-slaves.† Perhaps

* In the Russian provinces of Poland, Polish, by a decree of the present Emperor, is now the official language.

† Which, according to the Poles and the democrats of England, France, and Germany, they *are*.

the most popular of all the manuscript poems circulated secretly in Russia, is that written by Ryleieff, one of the leaders of the insurrection of 1825, on the subject of Voinaroffsky, an exile of the last century, who died in the country of the Yakouts.

"In the land of snow-drifts and snow, on the banks of the broad Lena," it commences, "are seen a dark row of wooden houses and the wooden doors of the cells. Around is a grove of pines rising from the deep snows, and the heads of lofty churches look down with pride upon the plain. In the distance murmurs the slumbering forest, the snowy plains shine white, and a range of flinty hills with fantastic summits extends.

"For ever harsh and wild is the grim aspect of these lands. The angry river roars, and storms abound, and often are the clouds black with thunder. No one visits this joyless country, the wide prison of the convicts; dreading the winter which is continuous and cold. Monotously pass the days with the wild* inhabitants of Yakoutsk. Only once or twice a year, with a crowd of worn-out prisoners, an escort of soldiers arrives; or from afar a caravan of Russian merchants will come to the forgotten town for the furs of Yakoutsk. Then all is life and bustle. People from all parts crowd together—the Yakout, the Youkagir of the desert carrying his rich booty of skins, the Toungous of the woods with his long spear, and the stalwart Siberian Cossack. Then winter for an instant disappears, flies from the gloomy places, and through green valleys flows, bubbling over the pebbles, the river Lena. Thus the sufferer in his cave beneath the earth, the prisoner almost dead with sorrow, is sometimes visited by a few moments of soul-felt joy. Thus, by accident, into his gloomy soul an hour of comfort flies, and brightens up the forehead of the convict.

* "Rendered wild," is the correct translation of the Russian word.

"But who stealthily, in the mist of early morning, comes out from his house and walks along the steep bank, with a long rifle at his back, in a short *caftan*, a black fur hat, and a girdle round his waist, like an agile Cossack of the Dnieper arrayed in his garb of war? His look is restless and gloomy, in his features are bitterness and grief, and on his forehead are the signs of agitated thoughts, traced by a hand at enmity with fate. He stretches his hands towards the west, in his eyes a sudden light shines, and with an expression of insupportable anguish, and with intense excitement, he exclaims:—

"'O native land, O native fields, I shall never you see more; and you the coffins of my holy ancestors I, an exile, shall never embrace. In vain the bright flame burns within me. *I cannot be of use.* In distant and ignominious exile, I am destined to waste away in grief. O native land, O native fields, I shall never see you more; and you the coffins of my holy ancestors I, an exile, shall never embrace.'

"He finished, and by a hardly visible path turned towards the rude forest and disappeared in the thickness of the wood.

"Who this prisoner is no one knows. It is reported that long since he was brought into this land of exiles in a covered *kibitka*. A smile is never seen on the face of the stranger, and his moustache and beard have now grown grey. He is not a criminal. See! the fatal mark is not upon him, which is a disgrace to human nature, and which is branded on the convict's forehead by the executioner.* But his aspect is twice as terrible as that of the fierce heads which bear the brand. He is at rest, but what rest! It is like the calm on a gloomy day, which precedes the storm; like the dead of night, when the moon is sleeping behind the clouds; and the fire of

* A practice long since abolished.

his eyes is like the light which flickers above a grave. He is always timid and silent, and wanders about alone as if demented, and looks harshly upon every one."

At that time Müller, the German *savant*, was living in Siberia, studying the country, and collecting from the natives the stories of Yermak, the robber, who conquered the territory for Russia. Once, when he was hunting a deer in the depths of a forest from which there appeared to be no issue, a shot was heard, and the animal fell pierced with a bullet. The astonished Müller looked around him and saw a strange figure, which was that of Voinaroffsky. It was too late to show the German traveller the way to the town, and the exile invited him to pass the night in his hut. Here the *savant* is astonished to find that his host, who has all the appearance of a wild Siberian huntsman, is a man of high cultivation. Voinaroffsky tells him his story, and informs him that until then no one in the country, not even the governor, had heard his name. Müller sets off to St. Petersburg, procures Voinaroffsky's pardon, and returns with it to Yakoutsk. But it is too late. The exile is dead.

This Voinaroffsky, who will be remembered by the readers of "St. Simon" as the accomplished lover of Aurora of Königsmark, was the nephew of Mazeppa, and joined him in his endeavour to liberate the Ukraine from the rule of Peter the Great. In Ryleieff's poem, it is clear that the Ukraine meant Russia and the rule of Peter despotism; and the lovers of analogies may see if not in Mazeppa Ryleieff, at least in Voinaroffsky Bestoujeff —Ryleieff's intimate friend, political associate, and literary coadjutor. Curiously enough, we find even a representative of Müller in Herr Erman, the author of *Reise um die Erde durch Sibirien.*

One evening when Herr Erman was making some astronomical observations, a voice called out to him: "*Vous plaira-t-il de me voir bien que je m'appelle Bestoujeff?*" Herr Erman replied by a Cossack proverb: "It is for

mountains to remain in their place, it is the duty of men to go forward to meet one another;" and visited Bestoujeff as Müller had visited Voinaroffsky. This Bestoujeff, a lieutenant in the Engineers, and the son of one of the most distinguished generals in the Russian army, had taken part in the insurrection of 1825, and had endeavoured to lead, not merely his own men, but a *corps* with which he had no connection, and which belonged to a different arm of the service, against the newly-proclaimed emperor. In spite of their officers, several regiments of infantry were carried away by the eloquence and the skilful misrepresentations of the enthusiastic conspirator, who, while pretending to fight for Constantine, the rightful heir, was, in fact, combating for the free Russia imagined by Pestal and Ryleieff. After the failure of the audacious *coup*, Bestoujeff, still at liberty, either because he was unwilling not to share the fate of his associates in the plot, or from utter despair, went to the palace and gave himself up to the guard, which happened that evening to be commanded by one of his personal friends. The friend had no choice but to receive the proffered sword, and the insurgent leader was consigned to safe keeping in one of the rooms of the Winter-palace. In the middle of the night, as Bestoujeff himself told Herr Erman, the Emperor Nicholas, without escort or attendants of any kind, entered the apartment, and spoke to him in a tone of contemptuous reproach of the glory, the long services, and the devotion of his father, General Bestoujeff, and of the treachery of the son, who had disgraced so honourable a name. This interview made so deep an impression on the young officer, that years afterwards, when Herr Erman met him in Siberia, he was unable to speak of it without visible emotion. In the meanwhile, Ryleieff, Bestoujeff's dearest friend, like him an officer in the army, and like him a man of high literary culture and a distinguished poet, had, with the four other prime agents in the conspiracy, fallen by the hands of

the executioner. The poems of Bestoujeff were, after a certain period of proscription, allowed to be reprinted under a pseudonym, but the works of Ryleieff were strictly forbidden, and their publication has never been permitted since their author was condemned, at the same time, to personal and to literary death—in spite of which his most important production, *Voinaroffsky*, is well known to all Russians who care for books, or who go into any kind of society. Independently of the intrinsic merit of this poem, it derives a peculiar interest from the fact that it was published only a few months before the insurrection, and that it foreshadows the fate both of Ryleieff himself and (as we have already seen) of his friend Bestoujeff. The enterprise of Ryleieff ended as disastrously as that of Mazeppa; the only difference being that Mazeppa had behaved very treacherously to Peter and died miserably in a paroxysm of madness, while Ryleieff, sacrificing himself for liberty, and for what he believed to be the good of his country, perished on the scaffold.

Doubtless there are plenty of Russians who think love of country consists in mute obedience and blind admiration, as there are numbers of Frenchmen of the Chauvin species who consider it patriotism to talk eternally about the first Napoleon, and to gaze with rapture at the column of the Place Vendôme. Such men would disapprove of such poems as *Voinaroffsky*, and would condemn most strongly the conduct of those Russian exiles who supply their countrymen with secret printed literature from abroad. From Nicholas Tourguéneff, who was in Paris when the revolt of 1825 broke out, and who, in spite of the most pressing solicitations, declined to return to Russia in order to answer for the part he had taken in the conspiracy, down to Alexander Herzen, the list of literary exiles, voluntary and involuntary, who have left Russia for England or France, and who have in some cases been obliged afterwards to leave France for England, is a long one. Of these exiles, the most celebrated, the most able, and the most active, is Mr. Herzen, who edits

the *Severnoi Svesda* (or "Polar Star") in London, where he has also brought out "My Exile."* He produced *Vom andern Ufer* at Hamburg, and published a certain number of copies of his work, *Du Développement des Idées Révolutionnaires en Russie*, in Paris—where, however, its sale was speedily prohibited.

The most important of Mr. Herzen's Russian publications, estimated by their influence in Russia, are certainly the volumes of his journal, "The Polar Star," with its fortnightly supplement, "The Bell." In these, everything that takes place, and everything that does not, but, in the opinion of the editor, ought to take place in Russia, is discussed; and ministerial acts which, under the *régime* of the censorship, it would be impossible to censure, are sometimes attacked with much violence. A Russian minister or official naturally cares but little what is thought of his doings in Paternoster Row; but there is a secret communication between Paternoster Row and St. Petersburg, and everything that is written by Mr. Herzen in London is read by some two or three thousand of his fellow-countrymen, or rather purchased by two or three thousand, and read by tens of thousands. At present it is the fashion, in St. Petersburg and Moscow, to receive Mr. Herzen's "Bell," or *Kolokol*, and there is reason to believe that the Emperor is not altogether averse to its circulation, though many of his ministers must detest it, and dread it; and it is a fact that one of these had, on a recent occasion, sufficient influence to get it seized in the "free city" of Frankfort.

Mr. Herzen came to the determination of establishing himself in England, and "erecting a battery here," to use his own expression, "from which to attack the evils of the Russian system," under the following circumstances. He had already given offence to the Russian Government, but was still in the habit of contributing to the Russian reviews, and in the beginning of the year 1848

* Being in the State service, he was sent from Moscow to a distant province, but not to Siberia.

sent to one of those periodicals the first part of a tale, entitled "Duty before Everything." We have said that just then the censorship was unusually severe. Indeed there were two censorships—the ordinary one, and another, composed (according to Mr. Herzen) of "generals, engineers, artillery, staff, and garrison officers, and two monks, the whole under the immediate superintendence of a Tartar Prince." Although Mr. Herzen's tale had been announced several times in the review in which it was intended to appear, the military and ecclesiastical censors gave him to understand, that not only "Duty before Everything" could not be printed, but that the Government *imprimatur* would be refused to whatever its author might produce—"even," says Mr. Herzen, "if I wrote of the advantages of a secret police and of absolutism; or of the utility of serfdom, corporal punishments, and the recruiting system. This decision," he continues, "convinced me that it was no longer possible to hold a pen in Russia, and that authors had no course open to them but to write away from the country." Accordingly Mr. Herzen went abroad, but it would be a mistake to suppose that all the authors of the country followed his example. He began his new career by writing in German, then published various works in French, and it is only lately that he appears to have adopted the resolution of writing entirely in Russian, and exclusively for Russian readers.

Of the effect of Mr. Herzen's writings in Russia, it is difficult for an Englishman to judge, but we have heard, on the best authority, that of the first volume of his "Polar Star," an octavo of several hundred pages, as many as three thousand copies have been sold; and whether these were purchased by Russians abroad or at home, the great majority of them must have found their way into Russia. We see, too, from a supplement to the *Kolokol*, that from 1855 to the present time, Mr. Herzen's publishers have brought out twenty-four works

in London in the Russian language; we must conclude that there is a sale for them, or they would not continue to be produced, and we know that they are only bought by Russians. Still, the nominal exclusion of Mr. Herzen's works from Russia must deprive them of a great deal of that publicity which is the very breath of journalistic publications. They cannot be introduced openly, cannot be read openly, and cannot be discussed openly. The *Times*, in England, enjoys its present enormous influence not only because it is purchased daily by fifty or sixty thousand persons, and read by two or three hundred thousand more, but also because its readers reproduce, in their conversation, the opinions and arguments they have seen expressed in its articles. Insensibly they become agents for spreading its name, and circulating its ideas, and thus hundreds of thousands of persons are affected by the *Times* without ever seeing it. It may be doubted whether Mr. Herzen's influence would not be increased in Russia if (assuming the Imperial Government to be willing) he would write for one of the native reviews, and submit to the censorship as a man submits to other inconveniences, for the sake of some greater good. At present, Mr. Herzen has liberty to write what he likes, but he has not the privilege of addressing himself to whomsoever he pleases. Each number of the "Russian Messenger" costs four times the price of the *Kolokol*, (published fortnightly, at sixpence,) and contains about forty times as much matter—and this in a country where, as we have already pointed out, paper is twice as dear as in England, and where compositors' wages, previously very high, have doubled since the accession of the present Emperor. The sale, then, of the reviews we have mentioned must be enormous, as compared with that of the *Kolokol*, and the question is, whether, as Heine thought it best to say a part only of what he thought in the columns of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, rather than be reduced to the necessity (in his own words) of declaiming

all in the limited sphere of a pot-house, it would not also be more advantageous for the opinions entertained by Mr. Herzen to be expressed with moderation in a recognized and widely-circulating organ, than to be announced in all their fulness and exaggeration through a journal which has a very limited number of readers, and which it must be difficult to obtain? Mr. Herzen would have to abandon his system of gross personal attacks, which can seldom do any good, and which carry less weight, from the fact of their being made by a writer, who, living in a foreign land, can no more be called to account for his words, than can the irresponsible ministers of despotism for their acts. During Nicholas' reign, Mr. Herzen, not being allowed to publish in Russia, did well to print his works abroad. He was of opinion, in 1852, that soon "the only free spot in Europe would be the deck of a vessel starting for America;" in spite of which he has, as a matter of course, brought out whatever he has thought fit in this enslaved England of ours, including books and journals which have been strictly forbidden in France and Germany. Mr. Herzen, it is seen, has a curious notion of liberty. He considers that England is not free, and—still more extraordinary delusion—that America *is*. Decidedly he could publish in the United States his "Bell" or his "Polar Star" as long as he confined himself to apotheosizing the chief conspirators of 1825 (whose portraits adorn the cover of the latter publication), or to accusing, by name, the ministers of the present Emperor of an intention to assassinate him; perhaps even he might be allowed to print his articles on the subject of serf-emancipation; but let him, in one of the southern States, say a word about the liberation of the American slaves, and he would, perhaps, find that the freest spot in America was "the deck of a vessel starting for England." Mr. Herzen certainly takes an immoderate advantage of the entire freedom accorded to all authors in this country. He writes, in fact, like one

who is not accustomed to say what he pleases—like a freed man, a *parvenu* of liberty.

Of Mr. Herzen's English, French, and German works, which do not altogether come under the head of secret literature, we shall not speak; but we cannot help calling attention to a kind of contradiction which runs through all his writings, and of which we are sorry to say one side has been far more readily accepted in England and France than the other. Mr. Herzen will complain in one place that Europe knows less of Russia than Cæsar before invading Gaul knew of the Gauls, will assure us (like the late Mr. O'Connell of the Irish) that the peasantry of Russia is the first in the world, will write enthusiastically about Russian poetry and the ardent aspirations of the studious youth of Moscow; and in another will point, with apparent satisfaction, to the peasants as actual incendiaries, will exaggerate greatly the number of proprietors murdered by their serfs, will represent the Emperor Nicolas as the destroyer of men he always assisted and honoured; in short, will so effectually conceal all that is good, and bring so prominently forward, and even magnify, all that is bad in Russia, that the reader feels inclined to thank Heaven he *does* know so little of the country, and says that, as Cæsar only knew the Gauls when he had conquered them, so we wish to know nothing of the Russians until we are compelled to fight them.

However, it must not be imagined that we look upon Mr. Herzen, led away as he has often been by his hatred of Nicolas and his ministers, as anything but a sort of injudicious patriot. We regret, for himself and for Russia, that he does not abandon the publication of works which cannot possibly do good, and which tend to bring his country into contempt.* On the other hand, it may per-

* It was bad taste, to say the least, to publish the "Memoirs of Catherine II." (which is merely a book of gossip more or less scandalous), just when her great grandson, the present Emperor, was introducing the important reform which Mr. Herzen has been advocating all his life.

haps be said that that was a bad system which would not allow a writer of Mr. Herzen's ability and aims to remain in his native land. Fortunately a great deal of this has been already changed. "Who, five years ago," said this writer himself the other day, "would have dared to think that the settled right of possessing serfs, supported by the stick at home, and by the bayonet abroad, would have been shaken? And who now dares to say that this will not be followed by the fall of the table of ranks, the secret police office, the arbitrary power of ministers, and a Governmental system founded upon corporal punishment and the dread of superiors in office?"

CHAPTER V.

SERFDOM; ITS ORIGIN AND ITS ABOLITION.

SERFDOM has not existed in Russia from time immemorial, as is commonly supposed, nor was it introduced either after the Norman or after the Tartar conquest, though it is certainly to the domination of the Tartars that the general backwardness of Russia in civilization must be attributed. Indeed, up to the thirteenth century, that country appears to have possessed more liberal institutions than any other of the European nations.

When, in the ninth century, the inhabitants of Novgorod quarrelled among themselves in their little northern republic, and at length cried out for a King, they sent to Rurik, the Varangian, begging that he would come and rule over them. The Scandinavian chiefs seldom refused these invitations. In 862, nearly a thousand years ago, Rurik arrived, and founded the dynasty by which Russia was governed until the accession of the Romanoffs, at the end of the seventeenth century. The Varangian chiefs (from

the Gothic *vara,* signifying alliance) were Normans. Karamzin tells us that in the annals of the Franks mention is made of three Ruriks—Rurik, King of the Danes; Rurik, King of the Normans; and a third, who was known simply as Rurik the Norman. After the death of Rurik, his son Igor proceeded to the south, attacked and took Kieff, and then descending the Dnieper, appeared before the walls of Constantinople, where, however, he lost nearly the whole of his fleet. Igor's wife, Olga, was the first Russian who adopted Christianity, but she was not baptized until after her husband's death in 957; and the whole of Russia was not converted until about thirty years afterwards.

"In ancient Russia," says Mr. Herzen, "there was no distinction between the rights of citizens and the rights of peasants. In general, we find no trace of any distinct, privileged, isolated class. There was nothing but *the people* and a race, or rather a family, of princes and rulers, the descendants of Rurik the Varangian. The members of the reigning family divided the whole of Russia into appanages, each of which was governed by its prince, under the supremacy of the eldest of the family, who was called Grand Prince, and whose appanage was first Kieff, then Vladimir, and afterwards Moscow. The consequence of this division and subdivision was a continual state of warfare, which was rather increased by the Mongol domination, and which lasted until the fifteenth century, when the Duke of Muscovy became Czar of Russia. The first effect of Russia's conversion to Christianity was to place Kieff in continual communication with Constantinople. Its second was to bind the nation together under the persecution of the Mongols, which otherwise, from divided, might have become dispersed."

The Mongol hordes burst upon Russia early in the thirteenth century; and in 1238 Moscow was stormed, pillaged, and burnt, by Batu-Khan.

Ivan III., the first of the Czars, freed Russia from the

yoke of the Tartars; but he failed to subjugate Novgorod, and did not attempt to regain Kieff, which had fallen into the hands of the Lithuanians. Novgorod was taken by Ivan IV., during whose reign Siberia was also conquered; but under Fedor, his successor, Russia suffered terrible disasters, which led at last to the invasion and occupation of Moscow by the Poles, while, about the same time, Novgorod was taken by the Swedes. Minin, the cattle-dealer of Nijni-Novgorod, and Prince Pojarski, drove the Poles from Moscow in 1612, but Kieff remained in the possession of Poland until 1667; and it was not until the dismemberment of that kingdom, in 1772, that Volhynia, Podolia, and the rest of White Russia, were restored to the Russian crown. The Swedes were expelled from Novgorod by Michael, the first of the Romanoffs, who was elected to the throne of Russia immediately after the liberation of the capital by Minin and Pojarski. The tide of victory now turned altogether against Sweden, Poland, and their allies the Tartars, from all of whom Russia gained conquest after conquest, until, in the reign of Catherine, she possessed a larger territory than had belonged to her under the Varangian chiefs. The Russian empire had grown strong; but, in the meanwhile, the Russian peasant had become enslaved.

Serfdom originated in an *oukaz* issued by Boris Godounoff, who usurped the throne after the death of Fedor, and who, as the assassin of the young Demetrius, may be regarded as the author of all the troubles that resulted from the disappearance of the rightful heir to the throne. Boris, with the view of restraining the nomadic habits of his subjects, enacted that every peasant should settle definitively on the land he had cultivated on the previous "Yurieff's day," which is still celebrated as a day of woe in the Russian national songs; though the subject of complaint in these compositions is not the slavery of the Russian peasant, so much as his inability to move about from one place to another. Some writers

pretend that the Sclavonians, like the Arabs, were naturally of nomadic habits; but it would be difficult to justify this assertion; and it is certain that the Russian peasant of the present day is as much attached to his native village as any Breton can be. It appears more probable that, under the domination of the Mongols, estates were so frequently devastated, that the Russian peasants were compelled to wander about in search of mere subsistence.

We have said that during the subjection of Russia to the Eastern hordes (from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century), the country was divided into a number of principalities, each of which was governed by a descendant of Rurik the Norman, under the patronage of Batu-Khan, Mamai, Ghirei *Sahib*, or whoever the chief of the horde happened to be. Under the principality system, the peasants went where they thought fit, provided they only kept within the limits of the principality to which they belonged. However, under Boris Godounoff, and by his *oukaz*, the Russian peasants were assigned to the soil—*glebæ adscripti*; and eventually the owners of land, availing themselves of the inability of the peasants to change their locality, extorted from them compulsory labour on their estates, and subsequently menial services about their dwellings. Thenceforward the peasant came under the police regulations of the landowners, but was not yet the property of his landlord, which, however, he appears to have become completely before the death of Peter the Great.

As long as Russia remained a purely agricultural country, the bondage of the serf was probably less oppressive than it afterwards became. Few nobles lived on their estates, and the peasants performed no forced labour. The proprietor gave them up the whole land for their use; and in return they paid him an annual sum, by way of rent, as is still done on many private estates and on all crown lands. The proprietor was liable to the State for

the taxes of his serfs, and was forced to maintain them if they had nothing themselves. As he did not live among them, he was, of course, unable to exercise any control over the property of the individual peasants, but imposed a tribute upon the whole village or commune—an institution of which we must say a few words. The commune has been described as "the family enlarged." The land set apart by the proprietor for the use of his peasants belongs to the commune collectively, each individual peasant having a claim to a portion of it, simply from the fact of having been born in the village. In other words, the land is divided equally among all who live upon it. No right of inheritance exists in the children to the share of the father; but each son claims an equal share with the rest, by virtue of his individual right as a member of the commune. The commune is governed by an ancient, or *starosta*, who is sometimes appointed by the proprietors of the estate, but generally elected by the peasants themselves. Baron Haxthausen "saw in the *starosta* the reflection of the imperial authority;" but Mr. Herzen tells us that the German author erred in supposing that the *starosta* governs the commune despotically. He can only act despotically when the whole commune agrees with him. The "imperial authority," says Mr. Herzen, "has no counterpoise; whilst all the authority of the *starosta* is derived from the commune." His functions, too, are purely administrative; and all questions of importance have to be decided by the council of elders, or by the members of the commune in general assembly. As every Russian peasant is a member of a commune, and, as such, receives a portion of land for his own use, there are, comparatively speaking, no "proletarians," as the French say,—no mere labourers and begetters of labourers, without a stake in the country,—in Russia. Though himself the property of his master, each peasant has at the same time property of his own; and all who know the Russian

peasant agree in stating that, if liberated without his land he will not set much value on his liberty.

M. Haxthausen thinks that a remarkable change in the condition of the serf was produced by Peter the Great and his immediate successors—in this way. The Government called in foreign manufacturers, advanced them capital, and assigned them ground for their establishments, at the same time furnishing them with a number of workmen, on the same conditions as those under which the serfs laboured for their landlords. They had to work in and for the manufactory; and the master was answerable for their maintenance, clothing, and lodging. This arrangement is said to have given rise to the idea that all the labour of the serfs belonged to the master, and that the peasant might be employed in any kind of work the latter might require. However that may have been, it is certain that in Peter's reign serfdom existed much as it did at the beginning of the present century, though the position of the peasant seems to have become worse under "the great Catherine." That enlightened sovereign, who actually proposed to the authors of the "Encyclopædia" that they should continue the publication of their work in Russia, and who invited writers and statesmen to send her projects for the emancipation of the serfs, used, at the same time, to give her subjects away as presents to her courtiers and lovers, and, moreover, enslaved the whole of the Ukraine.

Alexander I. discontinued the inhuman custom of giving away slaves to generals and ministers, in return for services performed to the State; but he does not appear to have done anything to benefit the general mass of the peasants; and it is well-known that his military colonies were quite a failure. It was thought, at one time, that Alexander I. would adopt measures for the gradual emancipation of the serfs, as it was said that he contemplated some approximation towards constitutional government; but either

his energy failed him, or, more probably, his intentions were frustrated by the old Russian party—that same party, which, in the present day, threatens to impede the admirable reforms proposed by Alexander II.

From the younger portion of the nobility Alexander's projects of reform could have met with no opposition, but only with encouragement; for among the conspirators of 1825 were numbers of young men belonging to the best families in the empire; indeed, there was scarcely a name of historical importance that was not represented in the "Society of General Welfare," as the association whose chiefs headed the insurrection against Nicholas was called.

Nicholas being met on his accession by a formidable revolt, headed by men of high intellectual culture, in all probability became more prejudiced than he might otherwise naturally have been against the free expression of thought, and against liberal ideas in general. Indeed, to be called a "Liberal" under the Nicholas *régime* was something like being called an atheist. The intellectual classes must have abhorred his sway. Nevertheless, within a few years after the punishment of the conspiracy of 1825, he began to occupy himself seriously with the condition of the peasants; and according to the St. Simonian precept, that it is the first duty of a Government to legislate for the benefit of the poorest and most numerous class, Nicholas must certainly be pronounced a benefactor.

By an *oukaz* issued by Nicholas in 1842, the serf was, for the first time, enabled to make contracts and to hold property, and masters received permission to liberate their peasants, on certain conditions. It was, at the same time, rendered illegal to separate the members of a family, which, if sold at all, must be sold with the land. For it is a strange fact in the history of Russian serfdom, that although the peasant was, in the first instance, attached to the soil in the supposed interest of agriculture, there was nothing to prevent the proprietor

detaching him from it, whenever he found that he could do so with any advantage to himself.

Nicholas also shortened the term of military service from twenty-five to fifteen years; and as the soldier on receiving his discharge becomes free, this measure, of course, increased considerably the number of the liberated. Every soldier, on quitting the army, is permitted to enter one of the crown communes, which is bound to receive him, and to allot him a portion of land. It is said that the discharged soldiers seldom profit by this permission. They become door-keepers, droshky-drivers, or servants. Frequently, too—almost invariably, when they have the opportunity—they return to their native villages, where, however, they have no longer any claim on the proprietor for land, nor he on them for labour. If they remain there, they live with some of their relatives, but they have nothing more to do with the commune. Baron Haxthausen has expressed his disapproval of this abridgment of the period of service. He holds that a man of thirty-three (the recruits are generally taken at the age of eighteen), who knows nothing but his regimental drill, and neither belongs to any one nor has anything belonging to him, is a useless, if not a dangerous, member of society. By shortening the term of service, says the German economist, the Emperor Nicholas laid the foundation of what had never existed in Russia before—namely, a mob. Of course the feelings of the soldier are not in any way to be taken into consideration. There is a chance of his becoming a pauper and a vagabond, therefore it would be better for him to serve ten years longer—which would, of course, diminish the chance of his annoying society in a remarkable manner.

In 1844 Nicholas issued another *oukaz*, which evidently tended towards general emancipation. He restricted the attainment of hereditary nobility to those who had reached the fifth *tchin*, or rank, and upwards, in the civil and military service. Only hereditary, as distinguished from per-

sonal, nobles have the right of holding serfs; but all the privileges of hereditary nobility may be gained by State service. Formerly it was attained with the lowest *tchin*, or rank, in the army, that of ensign; and with the eighth, that of assessor, in the civil service. Nicholas, as we have said, confined the acquisition of hereditary privileges to the first five ranks; and this was a very considerable limitation; for out of those, not already nobles by inheritance, who enter the State service, very few can hope to attain grade No. 5—that of colonel, rear-admiral, or councillor of State.

Nicholas also introduced a system of mortgage, through which hundreds of thousands have been set free, or, from being private serfs, have become crown peasants, which is nearly the same thing, inasmuch as the peasants of the crown merely pay ten roubles a year for their passport, and have a full right to all they earn or produce. The Russian nobles are known to be extravagant. To those who needed money, the Government advanced cash to the amount of two-thirds of the value of their estates. Then if, after a term of years, the sum advanced, with interest, was not repaid, the estates became government land, and the serfs crown peasants.

We may here observe that the serfs usually receive better treatment from proprietors who have been more or less in communication with them from their childhood, than from those who have purchased them as a speculation. The life of the serf may be considered as peculiarly miserable, when he belongs to a new proprietor who governs the estate through a German steward—the worst species of slave-driver that exists.

Let us now say a few words about the amount of serfdom actually existing in Russia. Many writers (among others Mr. Shirley Brooks, in his very interesting work on "The Russians in the South,") confound peasants with serfs, and estimate the number of the latter class at 40,000,000, instead of at about half that number. The

proportion of serfs belonging to private persons amounted, ten years ago, to upwards of 10,000,000 *souls* (that is to say, 10,000,000 males, including children). Since that time there has been a gradual, though not a very considerable increase in the number of freed men. Among other causes, not yet mentioned, that have contributed to this result, there is a particular effect of the law of inheritance, which should not be forgotten. If a person, not a noble, be the natural heir to an estate with serfs, he is unable to inherit it; but he receives the full value of his inheritance from the Government; the land becomes government property, and the serfs pass into the category of crown peasants, who, as we have said, pay a few roubles a year for their passport, but are otherwise free.

In 1838 there were upwards of 9,000,000 crown peasants, but since then the number must have increased considerably. Of the peasants belonging to private persons, about one-third belonged, in 1838, to proprietors of very large estates, and more than a third to proprietors in good circumstances, possessing from 1000 to 500 peasants. Nearly 15 per cent. belonged to rich proprietors, having from 500 to 100 peasants, and nearly a fifth part to proprietors of not more than 100 peasants, of whom more than 4 per cent. were the serfs of the smallest class of proprietors; that is to say, of those possessing not more than 20 peasants.

As a general rule, the serfs on large estates are in a better position than those on small ones. Perhaps, other things being equal, those are best off who are owned by proprietors in good circumstances; not so poor as to be tempted to plunder their peasants, nor so rich that they can absent themselves all the year from their "village." We believe a decree was issued by Alexander II., about the time of the coronation, by which owners of less than 100 slaves were prohibited from purchasing any more. He prepared the country in various other ways for the intended liberation; and that his in-

A WARNING TO VILLAGE HUSBANDS AND TO WIVES WHO ARE FOND OF DRESS.

A peasant woman was fond of dress, and told her husband to sell his horse and cow, and buy her a new sarafan. The poor man, though not pleased, bought her a new sarafan, and sold his horse and cow, and honoured his wife. The woman put on the sarafan, and took a pipe, and played to the goat, and the goat began to dance. But winter came on, and the husband had no wood. What are we to do? he said to his wife, you played all the summer, and now we are left without wood. Take off your every day dress, and put on your red sarafan, and without quarrelling with you I will harness you in the sledge, and you shall serve me instead of a horse, and shall drive me to the forest to fetch wood. Then he harnessed his wife to the sledge in her red sarafan, and began to whip her with the whip. It is winter now, he said, and you must pull me. I have become wiser now, exclaimed the wife bitterly, take back the red sarafan, and release me; sell my new clothes, and buy a cow and a horse, but do not harness me into the sledge, I am not so silly as I was. In the group at the left of the picture are seen two husbands in a superior station of life, telling their wives to take warning by the fate of

tention was sincere was apparent long since, from the tone of the St. Petersburg and Moscow Reviews, in which the condition of the Russian labouring classes has been, and is, discussed with the greatest freedom.

One of these Reviews, which, being the youngest, pays, appropriately enough, more attention than either of the others to the great reforms projected by Alexander II., published, some months since, a story by a writer named Pechersky* which is remarkable as showing the condition of the peasant, and, above all, of the proprietor, during the very worst period of Russian serfdom. We know well enough that such scenes as are depicted in this truthful and terrible tale belong to a past epoch; but, at the same time, the brutal and ferocious prince who is the hero of it could never have existed except under the Russian system; and M. Pechersky's narrative has also the merit of showing most unmistakably how slavery may degrade the slave-owner himself far worse even than his poor slave. To Mrs. Beecher Stowe's great anti-slavery work it might have been objected, by a determined advocate of the "institution," that, after all, the system was not so utterly bad that could produce "Uncle Tom." Nothing of the kind can be said in favour of Russian slavery, as represented by M. Pechersky. Here the slaves are so brutalized that they actually admire their master, with his barbarous magnificence, his savage pleasantry, and his utterly wild justice.

M. Pechersky tells his story throughout with the calmness of a writer who understands the force of irony; or rather, he is sufficiently an artist to be able to let his incidents speak for themselves. The great Prince Alexis is supposed to have lived in the time of Peter the Great; but we believe that a hundred years ago, if not even later, such men might still have been found in Russia. The type is sufficiently modern to be quite intelligible to many of those old nobles from whom the opposition to the

* Of which we publish an abridgment in the next chapter.

emancipative measures of Alexander proceeds. The tale, too, disposes of an argument which is sometimes brought forward in answer to those who maintain that a naturally cruel man who has slaves is sure to ill-treat them. "How can a person injure his own property?" say the defenders of serfdom; "it would be like injuring himself." They seem to forget that they are only paraphrasing what St. Paul says of husbands and wives—that he that loveth his wife loveth himself, and that "no man ever yet hated his own flesh." And if, in spite of these words, there are plenty of husbands who *do* ill-treat their wives, what can be the value of the argument when applied to a relationship which is far indeed from having anything sacred in it—to the relationship existing between a landlord and the human live-stock on his estate?

It is quite possible that the immediate effect of emancipation on many of the serfs will not be an improvement in their material welfare. "Whatever amount of influence, in the precarious state of Russian agriculture," says M. Tegoborski, "may be attributed to the *corvée* on one hand, and to the causes which depend on the disposition of the population on the other, it is nevertheless true that, in most of the districts which have a fertile soil, easy and regular communication and commercial activity, there are to be found among the serfs subjected to the *obrok* (poll-tax) as well as among those who are still under the *corvée* system, well-cultivated fields, stables well filled with cattle, and a degree of comfort not often met with in many countries of Central Europe." M. Haxthausen says the same thing; and it is very likely that, out of some ten million peasants who have hitherto been accustomed to look to others for their means of living, and in their old age for unconditional support, many will find themselves in a very awkward position, when they have to depend entirely on themselves.

As to the mode of effecting the emancipation, all that is really known is, that the details are to be left to the

consideration and decision of certain local committees, subject to the approval of the Emperor. It was said positively at first that every serf would, on his liberation, receive a sufficient portion of land for the maintenance of himself and family; but about this there appears now to be some doubt. Committees are to meet, or have already met, in the various governments of which the nobles have solicited permission to emancipate, each committee consisting of two members of the district, selected from the landed proprietors designated by the head of the local administration, with a member of a local committee for president.

The general committees consist of two members of each of the three districts selected by the landed proprietors, an experienced proprietor from each district, and one member appointed by the Minister of the Interior. Several committees have met; but, at the time of our writing, the results of the deliberations have not been made known officially; what, however, we believe to be a true account of the contest that is taking place in Russia between the Emperor and his ministers, supported by all the intellectual classes on the one hand, and a portion of the old nobility on the other, has appeared in Mr. Herzen's Russian newspaper published in London.

The *Kolokol*, or "Bell" (with the epigraph "*Vivos voco*"), is not only edited with great ability, but is well supplied by correspondents, who give the latest and most complete information that can be obtained on the subject of the reforms in Russia, or rather of the one great reform to which all other questions are now made subordinate. And the *Kolokol*, it must be remembered, is not merely the production of a few refugees, who feel called upon to publish from time to time vague complaints against despotism, it is the organ of a writer who left Russia voluntarily to "erect a battery" (according to his own expression) from which to attack the system he so thoroughly detests, and who now, thanks to his journal,

forbidden as it is, represents an important party in his native land.

Of the two volumes of the "Polar Star," to which the *Kolokol* is a periodical supplement, several thousand copies have been sold, and of these by far the greater number must have found their way to Russia. Mr. Herzen's views on the subject of Russian despotism, and the best means of abolishing it, may be gathered from the cover of this work, which is adorned with the portraits of the chief conspirators and insurgents of 1825, of whom one shot old General Miloradovitch with his own hand, and almost in cold blood; while the general plan of action consisted in deceiving the troops as to the motives with which they were to be led against their Emperor. "They did evil," it will be said, "that good might come;" but this is the principle of Jesuits and of the autocrats themselves; and Englishmen know very well that no good ever came to liberty from such means.

In the *Kolokol*, which, we are happy to say, is *not* illustrated, Mr. Herzen is less violent; and, so far from threatening the liberal Alexander II., absolutely feels called upon to warn him against certain noblemen of the old *régime* who at present surround him. "These persons," says the editor of the *Kolokol* (he goes so far as to name them), "interfere, and say to the Emperor, when he holds out his hand to the peasant, 'Take care; he will bite you.' The Emperor," he continues, "has fought Circassians and bears; but what are Circassians and bears? Is he not constantly in the society of a herd of people who seek to screen Russia from him, and to keep him entirely surrounded by a wreath of old courtiers, which on occasion would become a noose?" Do not these lines suggest to the reader Talleyrand's definition of the Russian form of government—"despotism tempered by assassination?" On the one side, Mr. Herzen shows us the old Russian nobles mortally jealous of any interference with their privileges, now as in the days of Paul; on the other, we

see Mr. Herzen's own "Polar Star," the organ of the extreme liberal party, rejoicing in a banner that bears the portraits of five conspirators who, in spite of the noble qualities some of them possessed, were all justly executed.

But to return to the question of the peasant. Mr. Herzen, then, is strongly in favour of an immediate emancipation. Nor will he hear of the peasant being merely liberated; that is to say, merely placed in a position to go where he likes and work as he can, without having a portion of ground allotted to him for his maintenance. For it appears that the Russian serf, with all his misery, would consider himself more miserable still if placed in the ordinary position of the peasants of England or France. Mr. Herzen proposes that the Government, Bank, or Committee of Trustees,* should give the nobles seventy roubles in paper money for every "soul" so liberated, to be repaid by the peasants themselves in the course of thirty-seven years. The proprietors to be at the same time at liberty to mortgage their estates to the trustees for a fresh supply of paper-money.

To this scheme of the *Kolokol* editor one of his correspondents objects, in the first place, that if all the proprietors were to mortgage their estates, the Committee would have to advance them paper-money to the amount of 768,000,000 roubles, making, with the sum payable for the liberation of 11,000,000 souls, 1,538,000,000 roubles. The question then arises, whether disastrous effects might not be produced by the introduction of so much inconvertible paper-money into the currency. The *assignats* issued by the Empress Catherine became so depreciated that, twenty-five years ago, when they were withdrawn from circulation, the actual value of the rouble *assignat* was not more than a quarter of a rouble silver.†

* The establishment advances money on mortgage to proprietors of estates.

† Writers on Russia still speak of paper roubles and silver roubles as having different values. But the present paper rouble is convertible

"Why, moreover," asks the writer, "should the peasant have to purchase himself at all, for however small a sum? He has been so impoverished that he cannot afford to pay for his liberty. The peasant but lately released from a state of serfdom is sure not to be in a position to spare money. As a serf, he has been in the habit of working by order of his master: if he loses a horse, the proprietor buys him another, and still he goes on working. Thus all self-reliance and will are destroyed, and he becomes a mere machine. When he is free, if he loses his horse, or his hut is burnt down, what is to become of him? It has been reckoned," continues M. Herzen's correspondent, "that a peasant brings from twenty to twenty-two roubles a-year to his master, and he will always agree to give his master ten or twelve roubles a-year for the privilege of working as he pleases; but he finds it very difficult to make the required payments at the outset. Besides, the proprietors of estates have duties as well as rights. The peasants have to work for them, but they have to give land and the means of cultivating it to the peasants, and are bound to support them in their old age. Now, by merely liberating their serfs, they would free themselves from these duties; but, in order to earn their independence, they ought to give up to the peasants a third of the land. This is what took place in Prussia in 1811, when the Government, on liberating the serfs, adjudged to them either a third or a half of the estates they were working upon. The Prussian Government called this liberation, but the proper name for it was partition: the proprietors and the serfs

on presentation at the Bank, and has precisely the same legal and commercial value as the silver rouble. The late M. Léon Faucher, an ex-Minister of the Interior, published, during the late war, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, an article on the resources of Russia, in which he committed the strange error of confounding the present paper rouble with the old rouble *assignat*. Naturally his conclusions were somewhat erroneous.

took each their due. In Russia, if the writer's scheme were adopted, the only difference would be, that the Russian peasant would not receive quite so much as the Prussian peasant did."

The author of this last scheme, which appears to us the most simple and straightforward that has been proposed —though too good for the peasant to be ever adopted, we are afraid—next examines an objection that has been raised for it. It has been said that it interferes with 'the sacred rights of property" (how successful these unmeaning phrases are everywhere!); but the real point to consider is, whether the nobles would lose by it or not; and in all probability the value of land would be so much increased, through every one obtaining the right to purchase, that two-thirds of any given estate would soon be worth what the whole is worth now. (We have already stated that at present none but hereditary nobles can purchase estates.)

Mr. Herzen's correspondent then enumerates various other propositions that have been made for effecting the emancipation, and which are as follows:—

1. The editor of the *Kolokol* (as we have already seen) is in favour of redeeming the peasants by means of government bills of exchange for 770,000,000 roubles, the amount to be repaid by the peasants to the Government in the course of thirty-seven years.

2. It is proposed that the peasants should buy whatever land they at present retain for their own use, and that for this purpose the Government should advance them 1,000,000 roubles.

3. Russia to be divided into three belts. Each peasant to receive from three to four deciatines of land, according to the fertility of the zone in which the estate is situated. The nobles to receive from Government 500,000,000 roubles.

4. Peasants and land to be both redeemed by Government—a plan which would involve enormous expense.

5. That each peasant should have two and a quarter deciatines of land, and should pay rent for it, as the crown peasants pay *obrok* to the Government at present.

It will be observed that this fifth plan is the only one which does not provide for the liberation of the peasant together with a sufficient portion of land for his support. Mr. Herzen has stated over and over again, in various works, that this is not the kind of emancipation the Russian peasant desires, nor that is suitable to him. The question has been misunderstood in Western Europe. The Russian peasant wishes to be free, but not without the land at present set apart for his use. He has no ambition to become a "proletarian," as Mr. Herzen says, nor to find himself "in the position of an Irishman," in the words of another writer in the *Kolokol*. The correspondent from whom we have already quoted makes this objection to the rent-scheme. "It would," he says, "leave the peasant too dependent on the proprietor. He might be unable to pay his rent, and would, perhaps, be called upon to substitute labour for it, and thus the *corvée* system would become re-established. The origin of serfdom in Russia should be remembered. Boris Godounoff merely assigned the peasant to the soil; yet only a hundred years afterwards we find Peter the Great saying, in an *oukaz* to the senate, 'In Russia people are sold like cattle, which is not seen elsewhere in the world, and from which no slight misery arises.' And as the people gradually become serfs, once so, they might, unless rendered quite independent of their proprietors, become serfs again."

Here the writer appears to us not to take into account the difference between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and the ideas that belong to each. Even in Peter the Great's time, there were not only no lawyers in Russia (our readers will remember the story of Peter the Great's two lawyers, of whom he intended to hang one as soon as he returned to his native land), but there was no law. In M. Pechersky's story of Prince Alexis, we find

a nobleman treating all around him as his slaves; not only his serfs properly so called, but merchants, over whom he had legally no sort of control, and even the small gentry who are visiting him, and who, to afford him a moment's amusement, are forced either to break the ice of the Volga with their heads, or their heads with the ice of the Volga. But as Prince Alexis would be something more than an anachronism in the present day, so, it appears to us, would any law or custom be, by which the peasant could be made to give up his liberty in lieu of rent.

On the other hand, it seems more than probable that, unless the Government insists on the strict observance of the great principle laid down in the first ministerial circular —that the peasant shall be liberated with a sufficient portion of land,—there will an attempt made to deprive him of what he is accustomed to look upon as his natural inheritance. In this case, however, the Government would find that had converted the serf population into a mob of peasants, who, in a period of distress, might form a "dangerous class" of the most formidable magnitude. But there really appears to be no reason for suspecting the Emperor of any intention to give way before the small party of violent and bigoted, or perhaps merely selfish nobles, who are now doing their worst to frustrate his excellent designs.

A correspondent, who occupies the whole of one number of the *Kolokol*, gives a full history of the effect produced by the publication of the Emperor's first rescript of the subject of emancipation, of the measures taken by a portion of the old nobility for impeding the progress of the scheme, and of the actual state of the contest between Alexander II.,—"the head of the intellect of Russia," as he justly calls him,—and the fanatic and egotistic noblemen who oppose him at every step. "The nobles, it is true," says the writer in question, "seem to be on the Emperor's side, but they, in fact, throw every possible obstacle in the way of the proposed emancipation. The

wish of the nobles of White Russia and the aim of the Government had been expressed clearly enough in the imperial rescript of November 30th (old style), which set forth that, 'in order to improve the condition of the peasants, it was necessary to free them from serfdom.' Three days afterwards a ministerial circular was addressed to all governors and their subordinates, in which it was stated still more distinctly, that the committee considered it absolutely necessary that the peasants should be released from serfdom; and it was ordered that copies of the circular should be sent all over Russia, 'for the consideration of the other nobles, in case they should form any similar wish, and should recognize the necessity of liberating the peasants, not only in White Russia, but throughout the empire.' All the peasants," says the writer, "heard of this, and repaid the Government for it beforehand by a love and an ardent confidence, which it is not the privilege of every Government to awaken. The Emperor had given his word publicly and solemnly to all, and the effect was felt in the most distant parts of the empire."

One of the consequences of the publication of the circular is said to have been the rising of peasants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, by many of our journals, has been ascribed to direct Russian agency,—as if the Government of Russia had not enough just now, and more than enough, to occupy itself with at home! "In the South of Europe," we are told, "the first rumour of the projected reform increased a hundred-fold the importance of our political and diplomatic position, and washed from the Russian name the shame of our late too notorious failures." This was the effect of the announcement upon the old courtiers: "they menaced the Emperor to his face with all sorts of dangers, and calumniated him when his back was turned."

In the meanwhile, numbers of the rural nobility hastened to St. Petersburg, ready to obey the first expression of the will of an all-powerful Government; but, being

met by an undecided ministry, they resolved to oppose all possible delays to the proposed emancipation, though they sent addresses to the Emperor, and resolved to testify outwardly their willingness to co-operate in his scheme. The ministerial circular had stated that the peasant would have to be liberated, with his house or hut and its usual appurtenances (*oussadba*). "The *oussadba*," said the minister, "consists of a house or hut, with a court (or farmyard) and a kitchen-garden." The sum to be paid for the *oussadba* was to be in accordance with its actual value; and it was further stated, that the land which had once been measured off for the use of the peasants could never be re-united to their master's fields, but must always remain the peasant's property. However, when the St. Petersburg Committee of Proprietors met, they decided that *oussadba* meant only the peasant's buildings, without the ground; and we are told that the principle was enunciated, that peasants ought never to possess the right of purchasing land, though it does not appear that this principle was ever adopted by the Committee. It is evident, as the writer in the *Kolokol* observes, that a great deal depends upon the meaning given to the word *oussadba*; and he expresses his conviction that the Government is willing to accept a false interpretation of the term, for the sake of pleasing the nobles. The ministerial circular, issued soon after the meeting of the St. Petersburg Committee just alluded to, terminates as follows: "The nobles need not adopt the propositions of the Government, but they must state what they find in them to object to. The measures for improving the condition of the peasant will depend upon the decision of the Committee, but unchanged and unchangeable must remain the principal heads of the scheme, as pointed out in his majesty's rescript; that is to say, the independence of the proprietor in the possession of the land, and to the peasant satisfactory means of pursuing his livelihood and of fulfilling his duties." On this the writer well remarks that the Government need only assure

the nobles, that if it thinks it necessary for the interests of the empire generally to continue to the peasants the possession of the land they now occupy, then the Empire pledges itself to compensate the nobles at a just valuation for the land taken from their estates. "Such a proposition," he says, "would disarm every one and quiet every one. The nobles would no longer object to an apportioning of land to the peasants, and the peasant would have what was necessary for his maintenance."

The reader sees how many different plans are proposed for the emancipation of the serfs, the only thing certain being that they are to be emancipated.

Of the effect the prospect of emancipation has already had on the peasant, some notion may be gained from the following letter, which we have received in English from a Russian gentleman, an owner of serfs:—

"There are different masters and different serfs," he says. "The serfswho are oppressed wait impatiently for their freedom, and repeat to one another,—'The time is passed for our masters to reign over us; we shall soon be equal to them, and they will no longer ill-treat us.' But, also, very touching scenes occur when the serfs have been treated with kindness. Some are so attached to their masters, that they begin to weep when they are told that they will have to leave them. That is natural; for from their birth they have known that they must obey their masters, and that they have nothing of their own; and if the master is of a good disposition, and gives them anything, or shows them any kindness, they receive it like a gift from Heaven, and are so grateful that no money could render them unfaithful. Some of them have had very little experience, and are wonderfully simple. A lady of my acquaintance told her maid she would soon be free, and it made her weep; she wept for hours and hours, as though she had lost some of her relations.

"To myself a woman said, 'Is it true the Emperor wishes we should be free?' I replied to her that the peasants

would certainly be free in ten or twelve years. 'Oh, no!' she said, 'that will never be: they will talk of it a little, and after that they will forget.' But that same day the circular appeared, showing on what conditions the peasants would be emancipated, and I was obliged to tell her; she was so anxious about it, and asked with such eagerness that I had to explain it all from beginning to end.

"I know a peasant who is more like a merchant. By only paying *obrok* he became rich enough to pay as much as 500*l.* for his freedom, and then in a few weeks the rescript came out. If you could only have seen him! He did not believe anything of the kind could have happened, and for a few nights he could not sleep, being wild with himself that he had paid. When he related to me that he had paid just before Russia was to undergo such a change, I could not but laugh, and, at the same time, I could not but sympathize with him and pity him. * *

"What must civilized and highly-cultivated men, such as the musicians of S——, feel? B—— has forty men, who have to play sometimes when they are not quite disposed. L—— also has seven musicians, who see no society, because they live in the country, as if in a desert. They are far superior to their masters, and infinitely so to those who are considered their equals—the other serfs. What, too, must that painter feel who finished his education at the Imperial Academy, and was really a great artist? His master liked foreign spirituous liquors very much, and passed the greater part of his life in a state of intoxication. Sometimes, in that condition, he would be quite in a rage with his serf-painter, that he would not paint him a devil, and said perpetually, that he regretted he had thrown so much money away for teaching him.

"Many of the serfs speak coolly and reasonably among themselves, and say,—'We have had patience enough to be slaves until now; ten years longer will not be much.' Ten or twelve years is the appointed time for them to pay

for their land, huts, and cattle. They will not, I think, continue in their present position more than a year. After that they will be only like men in debt. *Oukaz* after *oukaz* appears on the subject; and it is evident that the Emperor is in earnest, and wishes there should be no delay. It may be difficult for the Emperor to carry out the change without any sort of tumult: but the great majority of the peasants will wait patiently. All writers and men of education support the Emperor; and the articles and books that are constantly appearing on the subject will be of great help to him. The opposition proceeds from the old Russian proprietors, but they are not important."

As many of the rich merchants of Moscow and St. Petersburg are, at the present moment, either serfs who have purchased their own liberty, or actual serfs paying almost a nominal *obrok*, or poll-tax, to their proprietors, it may be inferred that one effect of the emancipation will be to add considerably to the number of the middle or trading class. This effect is, indeed, being already discounted. Witness the vast speculations that are being organized throughout Russia, and which are all based upon the hypothesis of an enormous increase in the commercial activity of the country. Many English journals discovered, some time since, that the Russians had no need of railways; but M. Kokoreff, a distinguished Russian merchant, thinks that the projected railways are not sufficient. He knows that facility of transport is of more importance to the country even than improved methods of production. The Russians can afford, in some districts, to sweep excellent bone manure from their waste lands, and export it to Scotland; but they cannot afford, in others, to allow grain to rot in abundance on the ground where it has grown, because there are no means of conveying it to provinces where the inhabitants are, perhaps, dying for want of it. To improve the means of communication

in the interior, and between the interior and the frontier, is the object of a gigantic association which M. Kokoreff is now endeavouring to form, and to which he himself subscribes no less than £80,000.

The fact is, the generality of Russians look upon the Emperor's reforms much more hopefully than Mr. Herzen, and the other writers in the *Kolokol*, seem inclined to do. The latter, among other grievances, complain that Alexander II. is surrounded by advisers who belong to the old Russian system; whereas it is generally remarked, in Russia, how few of his father's advisers he has retained; and on this subject an anecdote is told, which, though in all probability untrue, nevertheless shows the popular feeling on the subject.

"How does it happen," the dowager empress is reported to have said to her son, "that you have so little esteem for your father's memory, as not to retain his counsellors around you?"

"My father," replied Alexander II., "was a man of great genius, and it mattered little to him who were his ministers; but I, who do not pretend to have his abilities, am obliged to surround myself with capable men."

From this, it would appear that the Emperor is of the same way of thinking as the sculptor entrusted with the execution of the monument to Nicholas, and who listened patiently to a variety of suggestions from his friends as to the design, until at last one of them proposed that the late Emperor should be represented on a pedestal, with medallions of his principal ministers around the base.

"Very good," said the sculptor; "but too much like Kriloff's monument in the Summer Gardens."

The pedestal of Kriloff's monument is adorned with the portraits of the various zoological personages who figure in his fables!

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CHAPTER VI.

PRIVATE LIFE OF A RUSSIAN NOBLEMAN.

EVERYONE who reads newspapers must be aware that a contest is going on just now in Russia between an old and a new party. Formerly such Russians as took part in the dangerous game of politics at all, used to be divided into the German and the Russian party; and as the *beau rôle* was always given to the former, we may safely assume this peculiar nomenclature originated with the Germans themselves. German professors have undoubtedly been of much service to Russia; but the great majority of the Germans established in that empire have done nothing whatever to deserve the thanks of the people among whom they have gained their position. There are Germans in the army (none of whom have particularly distinguished themselves), hosts of Germans in the civil service, German stewards (much feared by the peasants), German apothecaries, German bakers, and German sausage-makers, but there never was any such thing as a German party, unless the immediate *entourage* of Count Nesselrode could be considered entitled to the name. The word German conveys no idea of progress to a Russian, whether he be a Revolutionist, like Mr. Herzen, or an Absolutist, like M. Gerebtzoff. By the latter the Germans are regarded as intruders, who not only have no sympathy for the Russians, but are the natural enemies of all Slavonians; the former despises them as the most willing and convenient instruments of unscrupulous despotism. The readiness with which they change their religion is remarkable, and is only equalled by the energy with which, if their official position requires it, they will afterwards denounce anyone who appears wanting in respect to the

Orthodox church. The most unpopular man in Russia at the accession of Alexander II. was a German minister, the notorious Kleinmichel, whom the new Emperor lost no time in dismissing. The Germans, moreover, have constantly opposed the emancipation of the serfs, and they will probably long continue to uphold that official routine by which so many of them live. Of course, there are enlightened and high-minded Germans in Russia, even in the civil service; but Kohl approaches the truth when he states that, for the most part, Germans are regarded by the Russians as little better than Tartars.

If we divide Russian parties into the new and the old, we find on one side the Emperor, with the Grand Duke Constantine as his lieutenant; all the authors, journalists, and professors of the country; and a constantly-increasing majority of the landed proprietors. This, of course, is the Reform party, which even includes a large number of the so-called "old Russian" party, as we shall presently explain.

On the other side are a few of the richest and most powerful landed proprietors, such as Prince Sheremetieff, Prince Metchersky, and Prince Menshchikoff, who, from pride and love of power, object totally to the proposed emancipation.* Doubtless, too, in the provinces, there are plenty of uneducated and rapacious proprietors who, from simple selfishness, are opposed to the liberation of the peasants. The great landowners are afraid of losing their prestige; some of the small ones, probably, tremble at the prospect of having to do something for their own existence instead of living, as heretofore, on the labour of their miserable serfs. This is not the Russian party, new or old, but simply the egotistical party. It has no principles and no belief, but merely a propensity to look

* Prince Sheremetieff, among whose serfs are numerous rich capitalists, is said to have refused as much as thirty thousand roubles for the liberation of one of them; yet from none of them does he receive more than ten roubles a year.

very closely after what it conceives to be its own particular interests.

It is in fact the great reform party itself which must be divided into the new and the old. There is no disagreement on the subject of the emancipation, or of the proposed reforms in the civil service; but in regard to other matters one section is in favour of a judicious examination and possible imitation of Western civilization, while the other believes that Russia will advance more surely through the study and development of her own early institutions. Peter the Great, according to the latter, retarded the civilization of the country by giving it a false direction, and all his work must be undone. If Peter the Great had never existed, say the Slavennophils (as the cultivators of Slavonian customs and ideas call themselves); if the gradual development of civilization, of which the germs existed during the period of the Czars, had not been suddenly checked, Russia at the present moment would not be struggling with the serf question, the system of tchinns, and the venality of officials. Nor, they maintain, would the upper have been completely separated from the lower classes, with whom at present they have nothing in common—neither ideas, nor customs, nor morality, nor belief.

During the last quarter of a century the Russians have paid great attention to their own language and literature; and during the last few years the social history of Russia, its ancient customs, its popular songs, and, indeed, everything connected with its nationality, has been studied with deep attention. This tendency received a fresh impetus from the war, and a sufficient proof of its extension was afforded two years since, when M. Aksakoff's "Chronicles and Recollections" appeared, and met with the greatest sale ever obtained by a Russian book. The subject of this work is thoroughly national, as are also the general treatment and style. It is the history of a portion of M. Aksakoff's own family, beginning with his grand-

father, and ending with himself—and it appears to have owed its great success to the fact that it gives the best picture of Russian country life that has ever appeared. The narrative commences in Catherine's time, and the demoralizing effect of the pretended reforms is shown in the person of one Michail Michailovitch, who arrives in the country from St. Petersburgh with every kind of vice, which the reader is expected to attribute to an imperfect apprehension of Western civilization. Another of the characters comes fresh from the court of Catherine with a limited stock of French philosophy and a considerable amount of immorality and irreligion. The orderly and virtuous country family are disgusted with the philosopher, and all are horrified at the conduct of Michail, who commits every species of cruelty, and at last dies suddenly—like the Emperor Paul.* The most remarkable personage in the book, however, is Stephan Michailovitch, the type of the virtuous patriarchal proprietor who treats his serfs as his children. "Those proprietors," says the good Stephan, "who require their peasants to work more than the usual number of days calculate badly; for they impoverish the peasants, and in the end injure themselves. Fining them or sending them into exile produces the same result." As for giving a peasant up to the police, it was not to be thought of. "Such a punishment was unheard of at the time; all the village would have followed the unhappy wretch as if he were being carried to the grave, and the victim would have considered himself dishonoured for the rest of his life."

The tendency of M. Aksakoff's book is excellent in so far as it increases the interest which the Russians were already beginning to take in their rural history; but the liberal or "Western" party, as the Slavennophils call it, seems to have thought that, allowing even for Michail Michailovitch, the "Chronicles" gave far too flattering a

* It is said that this Michail Michailovitch was, in fact, murdered by his serfs.

description of Russian life in the days of Catherine. About a year afterwards a narrative appeared, also in the shape of a memoir, in the "Russian Messenger," in which "Old Times" are treated from a purely hostile point of view. Whether the author, M. Pechersky, derived his characters and incidents from documents or hearsay, or whether he invented them (a supposition which we can scarcely admit), it is certain that the story is eminently probable, and there are many reasons for believing it to be true.

The author is supposed to have recently visited Zaboria, once the head-quarters of the princes of that name. The village is picturesquely situated on the banks of the Volga. It contains about a dozen "golden-headed churches," forty or fifty two-storied houses of stone, a number of other houses of the usual construction, a broad "Gastinnoi Dvor," or bazaar, a few factories, and some iron-works. Activity reigns everywhere. Along the banks of the river extends a long line of barns for the reception of wheat and other grain; and in the wharf are some hundred barges and boats of every build and size. Further on, at another wharf, the smoke of the Volga steamers may be seen. Right and left of the noisy populous Zaboria rise, like giants from the red clay, two hills—the extremities of two chains, which follow the course of the Volga in either direction. On one shine the richly-decorated churches of the monastery, with their painted walls and their cupolas of gold; on the summit of the other stands the magnificent palace of the Princes of Zaboria, now half in ruins; it "overhangs the village and the river, and looks gloomily down upon the scenes of activity that have grown up beneath its feet." The deserted, dilapidated palace, "seems to be exchanging glances with the monastery, as if those ancient piles were conversing quietly together about the tumult beneath; the murmuring of voices, and the sounds of industry which testify to the prosperity of the place and the hap-

piness of the people." They regretted the good old times "when all the activity and joy were on the heights, and in the village no one dared to speak aloud."

While the visitor is waiting to be shown over the palace by the village justice, who has promised to do the honours of Zaboria, he walks through the garden, which has now become a thicket, and comes to a pavilion.

"There was another pavilion there," says the guide, pointing to a heap of bricks. "It is said that Prince Daniel Borisovitch found something in it thirty years ago, and had it pulled down."

"What did he find there?" inquires the traveller.

"I don't know," replies the justice, who has now obtained the keys of the palace, "but all sorts of horrible things are said to have taken place here. The people who were living at the time are all dead, but there is a paper about it somewhere, written by one of the prince's stewards." In the picture gallery the visitor is shown the portrait of Prince Alexis Yourivitch, of whom the most terrible tales are told: it is a coarse, cunning, cruel, sensual, overbearing face. Next to him is the likeness of his wife, a delicate, amiable-looking woman, dressed in the Louis XV. style. Further on is the portrait of a lady, in a light blue dress and a hoop, who, judging from her slender waist, must have been very young. In her beautiful little hand she holds a rose, but the whole of the face is smeared over with thick black paint.

"Perhaps it was not like her," said the justice, when questioned as to the meaning of this disfigurement; "but it was rumoured that she was the wife of Boris, Prince Alexis Yourivitch's son, and that when her husband went away to the war she died, and that Alexis Yourivitch himself died soon afterwards." He adds:—"It is said that he regretted her very much, and that one morning, happening to come into the gallery, he fell senseless on the ground before her portrait. When he recovered, he

ordered the face to be blacked out, and he expired the very next day."

This Alexis Yourivitch was a type of the old Russian nobleman as he existed shortly after Peter the Great's time, when the boyars began to unite the luxury and vices of the West to their own native lawlessness and brutality. Unable to understand the nobler part of European civilization, they contented themselves with imitating whatever they found in it to please their own passions. The luxury and refined immorality of the Court of Louis XV. had especial charms for them, but while imitating it to a certain extent, they did not, in the words of M. Pechersky, "leave off their drunkenness, nor their arrogance, nor their idleness, nor their shameless boasting, nor their contempt for the decencies of life." Alexis Yourivitch had frequented Peter's Court, and had even felt the great reformer's stick. He had lived the wildest and most disreputable life in St. Petersburgh and Moscow, and at last, in Elizabeth's reign, getting mixed up in some political intrigue, had felt it prudent to retire to Zaboria, where, in another style, he led an equally boisterous existence, and at last "habituated himself to acknowledge no sort of law but his own will." He was in the habit of compounding for his sins by building churches, and making rich presents to the monastery; and, as he was immensely wealthy, he could repeat this expiatory process as often as he thought necessary. At last, in his fancied immunity from Divine punishment, this superstitious savage reached such a point of villany, that—to quote the narrative—"to us of the nineteenth century his life will seem like the vision of some disordered intellect. No! whatever the lovers of old times may say," continues the author, "the more we examine them, the more thankful we must be that we were not born a century and a half ago. Even in the forests of Yakoutsk there is no such disregard of human and divine

laws as existed during the first half of the last century in Russia * * * * * And it is possible that there can be men to sigh for bygone times! All honour and glory to those historians and writers, we say, who do their duty to the country by exhibiting these things in their naked dirt; and also to those who make laughing-stocks of the bribe-takers and the cheaters of Government. But, however low and mean the faults of the present day may be, I say again, 'Thank God, we did not live a hundred and fifty years since!'"

The visitor to Zaboria is fortunate enough to find the manuscript of which the judge has spoken to him. It is a narrative of the doings of the great Alexis Yourivitch during the "good old times;" written from the dictation of the oldest peasant on the estate, by the steward of Prince Alexis' grandson, in the year 1822. This peasant, in spite of the horrors he has witnessed (he is supposed to be a hundred years old), is as great an admirer of "old times," as M. de Gerebtzoff or any other of the most bigoted "Slavenophils." "Look at Prince Daniel Borisovitch," he says, "the actual owner of the estate. Whatever may be said, he is poor. Still he has more than a thousand serfs and consequently is a gentleman. But tell me, if you please, whether he is at all like one? He was brought up at Moscow, at the University, in company with tailors' and bootmakers' sons, and how can a bootmaker be a fit companion for a prince? And see what an effect it has had upon him! When he came to Zaboria, instead of giving hunts, and dinners, and balls, he went round to the peasants' huts, played with the children, and made the old people tell stories or sing songs, which he wrote down on paper. Now, is that the way a prince should behave? He used, also, to buy old books and pictures, for which he would pay any money; and, if he heard that one of the peasants had some very old book, even if it were the middle of the night, he would order the horses to be harnessed and would ride thirty or forty

versts to see that man. Then he would dig with the peasants, and if he happened to find some bits of broken dishes or old copper coins, he would wrap them up in wadding and send them off to St. Petersburgh, as if such trash could not be found there! Once, too, near the bazaar, he found a blind beggar singing psalms. Prince Daniel got into such a state, made him get into his carriage, took him home, placed him in a velvet arm-chair, gave him vodka, wine and food from his own table, and then told him to sing psalms, all of which he wrote down on a piece of paper. Of course the man was delighted, let loose his voice, and bellowed like a bull. Now, was that well? If you play with mud you must get your hands dirty; and was this the conduct of a prince?"

The old man then tells how differently Prince Daniel's grandfather, the great Alexis Yourivitch, lived. Those were happy and glorious times, he says, and which will never return. In illustration of his remark he describes a magnificent hunt given by Prince Alexis on the occasion of his marriage, which ended, however, with his Highness getting into a passion with his, narrator's, own father Iashka, and ordering him five hundred lashes. Iashka had already met with one or two misfortunes of the same kind, but, nevertheless, like his dutiful son, had a great admiration for his Highness.

On another occasion, when Prince Alexis Yourivitch went out to hunt, it was very cold, and there was a slight coating of ice on the Volga—what is called glass-ice, so thin that it could be broken with a five-copeik piece. The huntsmen caught about a hundred and fifty hares in the fields, and made a halt on the hill on the other side of the monastery. The hill was very high, and stood up straight like a wall above the Volga. The Prince Alexis Yourivitch was in a lively mood, and wished to amuse himself, so he sat down on the edge of the cliff, astride on a barrel of sweet wine, took a ladle in his hand and began to help himself and those around him. When he felt a

little excited, he told his people to make holes in the ice, in this way: they were to plunge, head first, from the top of the hill through the ice, and, on coming up, were to break through it in another place. That was the favourite amusement of the late Prince Alexis Yourivitch. "God grant him his heavenly kingdom," says the peasant who relates his history. On that day, however, no one could make a *reisack* (breach) to please him. "Some," says the narrator, "threw themselves stupidly on to the ice, and fell on their bodies, which is not the thing. That is called floundering, and for that the back receives fifteen stripes that it may know its place, and not put itself before the head again." Another never reached the ice at all, but struck against the side of the hill and put his neck out of joint; and three who succeeded in breaking through the ice never came up again; they "remained to take care of the carp." Prince Alexis was in a great rage. He screamed out, "I will flog you all to death!" and then turned to some gentlemen of limited income who lived with him, and told them to make *reisacks;* but they were far more awkward than the peasants. One of them succeeded in breaking the ice, but he also remained with the carp. Then Prince Alexis Yourivitch wept and sobbed: it was so very provoking! "It is plain that my last days are at hand," he exclaimed; "there is not one man here who can make a *reisack.* But where," he added, "is Crop-eared Iashka? he was the man. He would make three *reisacks* one after the other."

Crop-eared Iashka was the man who, on a previous occasion, had received five hundred lashes, and, in reality, he had no ears. Prince Alexis Yourivitch had once ordered him to fight with his favourite bear, when the latter got angry, and bit his opponent's ear off. "My father," says the peasant, "was unable to suffer it with patience; I suppose it hurt him; so he plunged his knife through Mishka's heart, and the animal died. And, as he had dared to kill the bear without the prince's

permission, Prince Alexis Yourivitch, in order that my father might not forget it, had his other ear cut off, and called him Crop-eared Iashka."

"Where is Crop-eared Iashka?" repeated the prince.

He was told that Iashka had been under his displeasure for the last ten years, and that he was away at one of his other estates.

"Fetch me Crop-eared Iashka; he will not flounder like you rogues!" he exclaimed: They galloped away for the hero of the hard skull, but he lived at a considerable distance from Zaboria, and when he arrived the ice was so thick, that even if Iashka had had a head of lead he would have been unable to make the required *reisack*.

Prince Alexis, when his own interests were not concerned, was a great lover of justice. Thus, having heard that a merchant at the fair held annually in his village, had cheated the wife of a peasant, he went to the shop of the delinquent, took from him a whole piece of cloth, and sent it to the poor woman, saying that the merchant Tchourkin offered it to her with his compliments, in consideration of her having been defrauded in the small purchase she had made. His Highness added, too, that if Tchourkin did not look better after his men, he, the prince, would attend to his business in a peculiar fashion. Scarcely a week had passed when Prince Alexis heard that the dishonest merchant had been defrauding some one who had purchased cambric at his establishment. He at once mounted his horse, galloped to the fair, and entered Tchourkin's booth.

"Ah! Tchourkin, Tchourkin, you have forgotten my orders," he began—"what a bad memory you have, to be sure. Well, there is is no help for it—I gave you my word as a prince, and I must keep it. Now, clear the shop!"

Tchourkin and all his assistants left the shop, and Prince Alexis Yourivitch went behind the counter, took the measure in his hand, and screamed out in a voice

that could be heard all over the fair, "Walk up, ladies and gentlemen, and see our goods. We have satins, muslins, and all kinds of ladies' dresses; stockings, handkerchiefs, cambrics, and everything. We give excellent measure, and take fair prices. We give no change, and accept no small money from our customers. We sell our goods for just what they cost us, ready money prices, but those who have no cash can have credit. If you pay we thank you for it; if you don't, then it can't be helped."

Everyone in the fair rushed to the shop. Prince Alexis remained behind the counter measuring out the stuffs by the yard and by the piece to everyone who wished to be served. In three hours all the goods were sold, but the sum they produced was by no means considerable.

"There," said Prince Alexis to the merchant, when the sale was over, "there is the ready money, but a good deal has been sold on credit. You can now exert yourself and collect the debts. My share in the affair is at an end—but mind you don't forget the two people you cheated."

His facetious Highness then entreated Tchourkin to dine with him, addressing him at the same time in the humble style of a shopman. The cautious merchant, however, declined, upon which the prince re-assured him, informing him that he had no intention of beating him, and that if he had he should make no ceremony about it, but beat him on the spot.

The merchant had no alternative but to go to Zaboria; where the prince still affected to regard him as his employer. He gave him the seat of honour, waited upon him, and called him "Sir" throughout the entertainment. After dinner, Tchourkin was dismissed with a magnificent present, consisting of two pups, the progeny of his Highness's favourite bitch Proserpine.

Prince Alexis Yourivitch, courageous and audacious

himself (when not suffering from *delirium tremens*), was naturally an admirer of courage and audacity in others. Once when he happened to be at the fair without attendants, he saw a merchant who had offended him by going away suddenly from Zaboria, after dining there, without taking part in the amusements provided for the guests. The prince made a sign to the merchant that he wished to speak to him, but the latter, instead of attending to the summons, called out,

"No, your Highness: you can come to me, but I shall not go to you. I don't want any of your knocks on the mouth, or your straps, or your cat-o'-nine-tails."

"Oh!" screamed Prince Alexis Yourivitch, with a disrespectful allusion to the man's parentage, and rushed towards him.

It so happened that at the end of a long lane in which the meeting had taken place there was a large pond, and there was no turning on either side. The merchant ran, and the prince after him, till at last the former was struck with a happy idea. He sat down, took his boots off, and found that he could run much better without them. The prince was pleased with the notion, and did the same. At length the merchant had reached the water's edge. He walked into the pond, and was followed by his pursuer. The chase continued until the merchant was up to his neck in water, and the prince up to his chest.

"Come to me; I have something to settle with you," cried the latter.

"No, your Highness," replied the former, beckoning also, "you can come to me, but I won't go to you."

"But you will drown me," said the prince.

"That depends on the will of Heaven," answered the merchant; "but I will not go to you."

The invitations and the argument were continued for some time, but at last each felt cold.

"Now," said Prince Alexis Yourivitch, "I like a

man of pluck. Come with me as usual to dine at Zaboria, and I will overlook your offence."

"You lie, your Highness," returned the merchant. "You would deceive me and beat me."

"I will not lay a finger on you," replied the prince.

"No: you are tricking me, your Highness."

"No: really I am not"—and so the dialogue went on until the merchant called upon his Highness to make the sign of the cross in token of his sincerity.

Then, standing up in the water, the prince crossed himself, and called all the saints to witness that he meant no harm to the merchant; who, thereupon, came out of the pond, and proceeded with his late enemy to Zaboria. We are told that the prince had ever afterwards the greatest esteem for this man; that he provided for his family, and that the merchant's son, who, through the interest of Alexis Yourivitch, had been admitted into the State-service, rose to be Vice-Governor of Zimogorsk, and purchased an estate with a thousand slaves.

When Prince Alexis took his *siesta*, not a cat in the village was allowed to mew. In the summer, every day after dinner, an arm-chair was placed in the balcony, in which the prince went to sleep, and until he awoke no one in all Zaboria, nor in the boats on the Volga dared to utter a sound; or, if any one did, he was taken to the stables and flogged. During the period of his Highness's repose a flag was exhibited from the top of his house, so that there might be no excuse for disturbing him. One unlucky day, however, a ruined landowner of the neighbourhood, who lived with the Lord of Zaboria, passed beneath the balcony devoted to that potentate's slumbers. Seeing at the window two ladies, who were also compelled by want of means to take up their residence with the Seigneur of the district, the humorous parasite was about to enter into conversation with them, when they motioned him with their handker-

chiefs to be silent. He then indulged in a variety of gestures with the view of making the ladies laugh, and at last shouted out the first line of a popular song called "The Road," and took to his heels. The watchmen on duty, with the confidence of their class, had gone to sleep, and the offender escaped without observation. The prince awoke, heated and enraged.

"Who was singing 'The Road?'" he demanded, in a voice of thunder.

Search was made in every direction, but the culprit had already reached a hayloft, in which he was now lying down and pretending to be asleep. No one knew that it was he who had shouted out "The Road," except the young ladies, and of course they would not betray him.

"Who sang 'The Road?'" screamed Prince Alexis Yourivitch.

The servants ran about like wild people, but did not discover anyone who could be suspected of the vocal feat in question.

"Who sang 'The Road?'" yelled the prince a third time, now making his appearance on the steps of the house with a whip in his hand. "Let him instantly come forward, or I will beat every one of you." But the invitation was not accepted, and then, his ferocious Highness having re-entered the house, the sound of smashing was heard, and there was much destruction among the looking-glasses and furniture.

To the butler and head-servants an ingenious idea now occurred. They went to Vaska, one of the professional vocalists of the establishment, and entreated him, with many bows and gestures of supplication, to take the blame upon himself, as the real offender could not be found. Vaska, however, was unreasonable enough to decline, on the plea that his back was his own, and that he preferred not to have it brought into contact with his princely master's whip. Then, with tears in their eyes, the domestics assured him that if he would only declare himself the

offender, the butler would find some means to get him off, and that in any case they would give him ten roubles—which in those days was considered a large sum. The singer scratched his head. He was unwilling to sacrifice his back, but at the same time anxious to have the money. At last he decided, and said to the servants,

"If he doesn't beat me with his own hands, see that you lay it on lightly."

By this time the prince had worked himself up into a state of frenzy. He threatened to give a thousand blows not only to each of his attendants, but even to the petty gentlemen who resided with him.

"Go and ask the young ladies, also," he roared, "and if they don't know they shall be beaten too."

There was universal fear: no one dared to speak, nor even to breathe.

"The cat-o'-nine-tails!" bellowed Alexis Yourivitch, his loud tone sounding all through the village, and causing everyone to tremble.

"They are bringing the man, they are bringing him," said several persons, as the butler and other servants were seen dragging Vaska along, with his hands and feet tied.

The prince sat down on a sofa, in order to judge the case. Vaska was brought forward, and the lookers-on were so terrified "that they scarcely knew whether they were alive or dead."

"Did you sing "The Road?'" demanded the inquisitor.

"I am in fault, your honour—I did," was the reply.

The prince was silent, and remained so for a short time. He then said,—

"You have a beautiful voice;" and turning to the servants, added, "Give him an embroidered caftan and ten roubles."

"So you see," says the peasant who relates the story, "what a kind man Prince Alexis Yourivitch was. He only loved order, and those who did not observe it were soon and severely punished."

The hospitality of the prince was equally magnificent and barbarous. On any great festival, such as the name's day of Alexis Yourivitch, many hundred persons were invited to dinner. Of these, about eighty or a hundred dined in the banquet-room, and five or six hundred in the galleries around it. At one end of the principal table sat the princess, with the most distinguished of the ladies on each side of her; at the other end the prince, surrounded by generals, governors, and other important officials. Each took his seat according to his rank, and if any assumed a place above his station, the fool or jester of the establishment was sent to pull his chair from under him, or the waiters in serving the dishes were directed to pass him by. On the floor, on one side of the prince, was a tame bear about a year old, on the other a *yourodeve* * with a bowl in his hand, barefooted, dirty, ragged, and wearing nothing but a shirt. Into the bowl his Highness put the contents of all sorts of dishes, with pepper, mustard, wine, and kvass; and Spira ate the strange ragout, singing nursery rhymes all the time. The prince used to feed Michka, the bear, with his own hands, and would give him such a quantity of wine that the animal was scarcely able to walk. The guests in general were served on silver, but the prince and princess, and the most distinguished, ate from gold. Behind each chair stood two waiters, and in a corner of the room were buffoons, dumb men, dwarfs, and Calmucks waiting till dinner was over, and in the meanwhile quarrelling between themselves. Immediately after dinner the prince's health was drunk—in champagne down-stairs, in mead and cherry-wine in the galleries. Then the musicians began to play, the vocalists to sing, the cannons were

* "*Yourodeve*," like "*blajennoi*," means at once simple and saintly. A *blajennoi* was in fact regarded as an inspired idiot. A Russian gentleman who was kind enough to write for us in French some particulars of the life of the celebrated Vassili blajennoi, styles him "Saint Basile le Stupide."

fired, the buffoons capered and tumbled around his Highness, the dwarfs squeaked, even the dumb made some sort of noise, the guests broke the glasses for luck, and the bear stood up on his hind legs and growled.

After dinner the guests would go to the drawing-room, and after partaking of some choice Hungarian wine, go to sleep. The flag was hoisted, and throughout Zaboria nothing was heard but the snoring of the prince and his visitors.

When the sleepers awoke, they proceeded to dress for the ball, which commenced at seven o'clock. Thousands of wax-candles were lighted in the ball-room, barrels of tar were set burning in the grounds before the house, and bonfires were made on the other side of the Volga. When the prince and princess appeared, the band struck up the Polonaise. Then the governor, in a green caftan, red estamet and yellow camisole, an enormous wig, and with his cavalry scarf across his breast, advanced to the princess, bowed, took her hand and led the dance; the other couples following according to their rank. After the Polonaise, the guests entered a side room where a band of Italian musicians played until they were all seated; a curtain was drawn aside, and the daughter of one of the peasants, Dounyashka, the prettiest girl in the village, appeared. She was dressed in the Pompadour style, with her hair powdered, and *mouches* on her cheeks; in fact, in the exact costume worn by shepherdesses—at the court of Louis XV. Dounyaskha commenced reciting a congratulatory ode to the prince—written by Simeon Tititch, the poet of Zaboria—and then Parashka, another shepherdess, appeared, and said pretty things about love and lambs to Dounyashka. We must not forget to mention that Simeon Tititch was a gentleman of strongly-marked Bohemian tendencies, whom, to preserve from intoxication, it was necessary to lock up for several days when a complimentary poem was required. A little scullion, named Androushka, made a terrific descent in the midst

of fireworks. He was supposed to represent Phœbus, for which reason he wore a yellow caftan and blue trousers covered with golden spangles. In his hand he held a piece of wood with a hole in the centre covered with strings; this was his lyre. In his hair were yellow wires in simulation of rays. Finally, nine girls entered in the character of Muses, and crowned the prince with a wreath of flowers gathered in his own hot-house. Sometimes Alexis Yonrivitch would call for Simeon Tititch, but the poet was never in a fit state to appear—being usually tied to some article of furniture in his own room, on account of his turbulent propensities when drunk.

Supper was a repetition of dinner, with fewer dishes and more drink. After supper the ladies and all the gentlemen of inferior rank disappeared, and Prince Alexis, with fifteen or twenty of the most distinguished guests, went outside to the pavilion. There the host took his coat off as a sign that every one was to be at his ease, after which drinking set in with extreme severity, and lasted until the next morning.

Sometimes, in the midst of his sensual life, Alexis Yourivitch received what he considered a warning, though he never profited by it. One night after a hunting party, having been overtaken by a storm, he sought refuge in the house of a friend, but was unable to sleep. It was past midnight, the wind was moaning in the chimney and howling on the roof, when the man in attendance outside the prince's door heard him say, not in his usual voice, but in a soft subdued tone :—

"Peter Alexeievitch, Peter Alexeievitch, are you asleep?"

"No, I am not asleep," answered his friend. "What do you want?"

"I am afraid of something. What is that moaning?" inquired Alexis Yourivitch.

"It is the wind," cried the other.

"No, it is not the wind, Peter Alexeievitch," continued the prince; "it is something else."

"But what else can it be?" persisted the friend.

"No, Peter Alexeievitch, it is not the wind; listen, listen!" exclaimed his Royal Highness.

"Well, it is the howling of your dogs."

"Nonsense, nonsense, Peter Alexeievitch, it is the soul of Paletsky moaning. Did you know Paletsky?"

"Come, come! have you lost your reason? Can the soul of a dead man moan?"

"Don't talk that way, don't talk that way, Peter Alexeievitch! There are many things in the world that we don't understand; and I know that is Paletsky who is moaning; don't you hear him? O Lord, have mercy on thy servant! This is frightful, Peter Alexeievitch! And your lamp is burning so low! Let me light a candle."

"Light as many candles as you please, but don't be childish. Are you not ashamed to be afraid of people who are dead?"

"Yes, you may say that, but I know what it is; it is Paletsky who is calling me, and you will soon have to bury me, my friend."

"In that case," remarks Peter Alexeievitch, anxious to improve the occasion, "in that case you had better think of your affairs."

"And what do you mean by my affairs?" says the prince. "Have I ever robbed any one, or envied any one, or have I given little to the poor? No, Peter Alexeievitch, on that score I am quite at my ease. I depend on the mercy of God. I do not know of any bad action that I have committed, but still I am afraid."

"Just so, my friend; and be sure that it is sin, not death, that terrifies."

"There, there, you are so annoying with your sins. It is impossible to speak to you for an instant, but you

must begin talking about the devil knows what. I will put the candle out, and we will go to sleep."

The candle is put out, but still Alexis Yourivitch cannot get any rest. He sighs, throws himself about in the bed, and the wind again begins to moan.

"What are you sighing for?" asked the host once more.

"I am sighing because of my approaching death," replies the prince. "Do you hear, do you hear?" he calls out. "It is Paletsky, it is his voice; Lord have mercy on his soul."

This kind of thing goes on all night. At last the prince announces his intention of writing to his son Boris to come to him at once, that he may see him decently buried.

"I will leave this hunt to Satan," he says, "and will go back to Zaboria, and take farewell of my wife, like a Christian."

"That is right," says the good Peter Alexeievitch. "Though these visions mean nothing, go to Marta Petrovna, and become reconciled to her in a Christian spirit; for I know that this is the sixth year that you have not spoken to her, and the poor creature is nearly worn out."

"Oh, what does it matter about her? She is but a woman. A good strapping is what she deserves."

"A strapping, prince? Ah! you have forgotten those days when you sighed so for the Princess in Moscow."

"We were silly in those days, my friend. But it is terrible to die. Oh, youth, youth!"

"Just so, my friend; but, instead of giving yourself up to superstitious ideas, you ought to think oftener of death, and gradually to curb your passions, and live in peace with those around you."

"What have I done, then? Have I offended anyone? There is not a fowl in the poultry yard that can com-

plain of me. But still it is fearful to die! Oh, my head, my head!"

Then suddenly he exclaims, "I will become a monk." *

"And what will your wife do?" asks Peter Alexeievitch.

"Oh, she can go to Satan," is the Christian-like reply. "I only want to save my own soul. She must do as she thinks best; the devil take her."

"Ah, prince, prince; what am I to do with you?" cries Peter Alexeievitch in despair.

"What are you to do? Why, pray for me. I know that you are a good man, and love God; and that, though you mix with the world, you are better than all the monks in their black clothes. Pray for me, a miserable sinner; let your holy prayers obtain remission for my sins! Dreadful is the hour of death, sad is my soul; oh, save it from the inextinguishable fire!"

And again he cried and moaned, and fell at Peter Alexeievitch's feet, kissing them, and sobbing until he could hardly speak.

Suddenly, however, at the end of the garden the horn was sounded, and the hounds burst into full cry as they started after the fox. The prince jumped up, threw his clothes on, rushed out of the room without even taking leave of his host, mounted his horse, and galloped after the hunt.

On his return to Zaboria, Prince Alexis found a letter waiting for him from his son, Prince Boris Alexeievitch. He glanced at its contents, roared like a bull, and once more the smashing of looking-glasses and tables was heard. The attendants fell on their knees, and began to pray that the storm might be averted from *their* heads, while others rushed in terror from the house.

* An ingenious and not uncommon device for cheating Satan. Thus Ivan the Terrible, after a life of unexampled atrocity, assumed the cowl on his death-bed.

The prince called for the princess. Doremidont, one of the servants, was imprudent enough to inform his master that she was confined to her room, upon which the unhappy man fell "like a sheaf" to the ground, and when he got up found that he had five teeth missing. The prince rushed upstairs to his wife's apartment, and found her lying quite ill on a sofa, with Kondratie Sergeievitch sitting at the table reading the life of Saint Barbara. We must mention that Kondratie Sergeievitch was a studious, well-informed, well-behaved, devout gentleman, who had been *driven from his estate by a powerful neighbour*, and had afterwards taken up his residence in the mansion of the Prince of Zaboria.

"Ah!" screamed Alexis Yourivitch; "it is you! you who have corrupted your son till he has married a slut! and this is how you spend your own time, with your lovers!" and the prince gave full vent to his brutal fury. . . . . .

The next morning there were no traces in Zaboria of Kondratie Sergeievitch, and the Princess Marta Petrovna was a corpse.

The funeral was superb. There were three archimandrites, and a hundred priests; and though scarcely any one present had known the princess, every one wept, except the prince, who walked behind the coffin without shedding a tear. But it was observed that he had become much thinner, his lips trembled convulsively, and from time to time a shudder seemed to pass through his whole frame. For six weeks afterwards all the beggars who came to Zaboria were fed at the prince's expense, and money was distributed among them every Saturday. Altogether the interment cost about three thousand roubles.

At the funeral dinner the prince talked to the archimandrite in the most edifying manner about the Scriptures, the way to save the soul, and the duty of a Christian. "There was my poor princess," he said; "she lived a humble and holy life, and prepared herself a

place in the kingdom of the blessed." He also declared that life had no charms for him now that his wife was gone, and entreated the archimandrite to take him into the monastery, adding that he would bring with him the sum of forty thousand roubles.

"Make no rash decision," said the archimandrite; "have you not a son to live for?"

"You mean Borka?'* exclaimed the humble-minded Alexis. "If he values *his* life he had better not show his face here. The infernal rascal! He has ruined me and has been the cause of his mother's death. He has brought shame upon me in my old age. He has attached everlasting disgrace to our name. Without waiting for our permission or for the blessing of his parents, he married some slut without a farthing. It would have been an honour to the drab to have looked after my pigs. It was that scoundrel who killed the princess. When she heard of it she fell to the ground, poor creature, had a rush of blood to the head, and did not live an hour afterwards, the dear dove!"

"In the midst of misfortune you should humble yourself, prince," remonstrated the archimandrite.

"What! humble myself before Borka?" laughed Alexis Yourivitch. "No indeed! No such luck for him. I will get married again, I am still strong, and will have other children; and they shall share my money, and Borka and his drab of a wife may beg their bread, for not a copper copeik shall they get from me. There are plenty who will be glad to have me, and if I can find no one else I will marry Malashka, the girl in the poultry-yard."

Just then the priest began to drink the *trisna*,† the deacons recited the "*Vo blajennom ouspennie*" (bliss to

* Contemptuous diminutive of Boris.

† At funeral feasts a mixture of wine, rum, mead, and beer is made. It is called *trisna* (the name of the funeral ceremony of the ancient Slavonians); and when it is handed round, every one stands up, while the clergy recite the final prayer, at the end of which the *trisna* is drunk to the health of the departed soul.

the departed), and the choir chanted the "*Vetchnoyou pamyat*" ("Eternal Memory"). Every one stood up and prayed, except Prince Alexis Yourivitch, who fell "like a sheaf" before the holy images, and sobbed so bitterly that no one could see him without shedding tears. It was with difficulty that he was raised from the ground. The next day his grief was so great that he ordered numbers of peasants to be flogged, and beat some of them with his own hand. Every one he chanced to see had done something wrong. The small gentry who lived with him at last lost all patience and resolved to leave Zaboria; but, fortunately, the prince only remained in his terrible humour for about a week. After that he went out hunting, and had no sooner killed a bear than his sorrow and his anger disappeared as if by magic. But he now began to show signs of age, and was subject to frequent attacks of depression. Sometimes at the end of a hunt he would, according to custom, take his seat on a barrel of vodka, help himself with a ladle to a portion of the contents, and drink to the health of all present; when, suddenly, a cloud would pass over his face, the ladle would fall from his hand, and, instead of the laughter which a moment before had resounded through all the field, there would be a dead silence. The prince would remain in this state of despondency for some time, when he would again brighten up, and say, "I frightened you, my friends. Ah, my brothers, I shall soon have to die." Then he would begin singing. Thousands of voices would join in the song, and there would be dancing, shouting, and drinking until nightfall.

In spite of the paternal displeasure, Prince Boris had no intention of staying away permanently from Zaboria, and a year after his mother's death he communicated to his father his intention of paying him a visit. Prince Alexis read a letter, and called to the head-butler, who received the following instructions:

"To-morrow," commenced the prince, "Borka will arrive with his slut of a wife. No one must dare to take his hat off to them, and let every one who meets them bark in their faces. Allow them to come to the house, but don't unharness the horses, so that as soon as I have given them a lesson they may start off without delay."

The prince's directions were carried out to the letter, and Boris and his young wife had to suffer all kinds of humiliations. The former arrived with his head hanging down, the latter with her eyes full of tears—her kind words and gentle demeanour producing not the slightest effect on the mob of brutalized peasants. Before entering the village they had been met by about a hundred and fifty boys who had been sent out purposely to receive them, and who welcomed them with outstretched tongues and derisive shouts. At the entrance to the mansion stood Prince Alexis Yourivitch, with a whip in his hand; his eyes burning like those of a wolf, his head shaking, and his whole body trembling convulsively.

The servants slunk away. They were prepared for a storm such as, with all their experience, they had never witnessed before. As a precautionary measure—not knowing what might happen, and who might have to confess—they had actually introduced a priest into the house by a back staircase.

The young couple descended from the carriage. The prince rushed furiously upon them, but, at the sight of the bride, he stopped suddenly as if paralyzed; his whip fell from his hand, and his face beamed with delight. Prince Boris fell at his parent's feet. The princess would have done the same, but she was checked by her father-in-law, who took her in his arms, embraced her, complimented her, forgave Boris on the spot, and ordered a grand feast in honour of the new arrivals.

Now all was joy in Zaboria, but at the banquets there were no longer bears or buffons, nor noise nor drunken-

ness. And if any of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood even hinted at the nightly revels which formerly took place in the pavilion, the prince gave him such a look that the imprudent speaker instantly became dumb. This wonderful change was the work of the young princess, Varvara Mikhailovna by name. She would say to Alexis Yourivitch, "No, father, this is not right," and instantly he would obey her. Not only was there an end to flogging, but all the rods and whips were gathered together and burned. Those of the petty gentlemen residing with Prince Alexis who were too much attached to *vodka* and other drinks were sent to live in another village, and decency and order reigned in Zaboria. Even at the hunts, things did not go on as before. Prince Alexis gave up his habit of sitting astride on a barrel and drinking *vodka* out of a ladle. He would now take a glass or two himself, and give the same to those who were with him, but would let no one drink too much; saying, that "his daughter might hear of it and be annoyed." He also became very fond of his son, and said that Boris and his wife should manage the estate, and that after another year—by which time he trusted he might see a little grandson—he should retire to the monastery, to pray for them and prepare for death.

The Princess Varvara Mikhailovna *did* have a little son, and the old man's joy knew no bounds. For nine days he kept guard outside her room, that no one should disturb her. He carried his grandchild about the house singing nursery rhymes to it, and on the occasion of its christening gave a silver rouble to each of the servants, and liberated two hundred of the peasants. The young prince did not live for more than six weeks, and when he died Alexis Yourivitch took to his bed, and for two days ate nothing, and spoke scarcely a word. The mother, in the midst of her grief for her child, had to console the grandfather, who, however, was for a long time inconsolable.

About a year after the arrival of Boris and his wife at Zaboria, news was received that the King of Prussia was moving, and that there would certainly be war. As Prince Boris was in the military service, he prepared to take his departure, and the Princess Varvara would have accompanied him, had not Alexis Yourivitch entreated her, with tears in his eyes, to remain. Boris joined his prayers to his father's, representing to Varvara that it would be impossible for her to accompany the army, until at last she consented to stay at Zaboria.

The leave-taking was very painful and very solemn. After the service for persons setting out on a journey had been performed in the church, Prince Alexis Yourivitch gave his son his blessing, together with a holy image. He then embraced him, and exhorted him to fight bravely, not to spare himself, but to shed his blood freely, and, if necessary, give up his life for his mother, the Empress. As for his wife, he told him not to grieve for her; that she should be cared for, whatever happened to him.

The princess was so unhappy at the loss of her husband, that, after his departure, no sort of entertainment was given at Zaboria until letters arrived from Prince Boris, containing accounts of the battles in which he had been engaged, and saying that he was not to go further into the Prussian territory: he had in fact been appointed to the command of Memel, which was now in the hands of the Russians. Then there was a little more animation in the village, and visitors were again entertained by Prince Alexis, but still in the most quiet and orderly manner.

At last "Satan grew weary of the prince's good behaviour." Alexis Yourivitch had a terrible scene with his beautiful daughter-in-law, which ended by her attempting to leave the room and fainting. After this the nature of the brutal monster again asserted itself. The cat-o'nine-tails was brought out afresh, the orgies recommenced, and the palace of Zaboria was once more a tavern.

In the prince's court-yard was a bandit, who, finding himself the last of his gang, had left the woods and come to Zaboria. Alexis Yourivitch liked the man, and had attached him to his own person. He was an excellent spy, and kept his master well informed about everything that took place in the village. One day the robber brought the prince a letter which he had just intercepted: it was from the Princess Varvara to her husband. His Highness looked gloomy, ferocious, and walked about the house with his hands behind his back, whistling. The next day a letter arrived from Zimogorsk, announcing a visit from the Voievod and Governor in consequence of a letter they had received from the Princess Varvara. All that night the prince and the brigand (Grishka Chatoun was his euphonious name) remained closeted together. The next morning the servants were told to get the Princess Varvara's clothes together, as she was about to start for Memel to see her husband. In the evening the carriage was in readiness. The princess took farewell of every one, and it was observed that when she kissed Prince Alexis Yourivitch's hand, she trembled all over, and nearly fell. "God be with you, God be with you," said the prince. "Hand her into the carriage!"

That night the prince went into the pavilion, and remained there a long time. When he came out he locked the door, and threw the key into the Volga. All the gates leading to the garden were nailed up, and orders were given that no one should go near the place.

At the same time Arina, a poor woman who had been ill for four weeks with the ague, disappeared. It had been thought that she could not possibly recover, when all at once she somehow or other went away, and was never seen again.

In about a fortnight, Grishka Chatoun, and two women who had accompanied the Princess Varvara, returned with the news that she had died on the road from fatigue. Chatoun brought a letter from the doctor and another

from the priest who had buried her. The prince took both documents, and locked them up in his desk.

Alexis Yourivitch had in fact sent away Arina, who in due time died on the road of her ague, and was interred as the princess Varvara. The unhappy Varvara, in the meanwhile, had been walled-up in the pavilion.

Chatoun and his assistants were sent the next day for an excursion on the Volga in a leaky boat. The river was full of ice, and the wind was blowing hard. The prince stood on one of the hills by the river side and looked on. As the boat sank he made the sign of the cross, and then went to the monastery to have prayers said for the soul of the departed princess.

On reaching home, Alexis Yourivitch had a barrel of *vodka* brought into the drawing-room, and drank with his peasants for a fortnight. He gave to one a diamond ring, to another a piece of rich velvet, and behaved generally like a madman. At last an officer and some soldiers arrived. The prince put on his general's uniform with the cavalry scarf across his breast, called to his servants for the cat-o'-nine tails, and prepared to receive his visitors. When they entered, the prince scarcely rose from his seat. "We have come to institute a very strict inquiry respecting your conduct to the Princess Varvara, and in regard to your behaviour generally," said the major.

"And how dare you show your menial faces here?" roared the prince. "You shall be flogged, and so shall the Voievod, who sent you, if he dares to come."

"Be calm, prince," said the officer. "I have an escort of dragoons, and I come not from the Voievod, but from the Empress."

The prince, on hearing these words, trembled all over, and cried out, "I am lost, I am lost," knelt at the major's feet, begged him to accept twenty thousand roubles and go, and abased himself in every way.

The officer commenced questioning him, but Alexis

Yourivitch rolled his eyes like a maniac, answered incoherently; and the major, seeing that he was not in possession of his senses, determined to postpone the inquiry until the next day. The prince entered the picture-gallery, but stopped and started when he saw the portrait of the Princess Varvara. He fancied he saw the head move, and fell senseless to the ground. When he recovered a little he ordered the servants to cover the face with black paint. He was carried to bed, and a surgeon bled him. He then asked whether the face had been painted out, and, being answered in the affirmative, died.

The family of the Princess of Zaboria is now extinct.

Prince Alexis Yourivitch was at one time so rich, that he used to reckon his plate by hundredweights, and his silver roubles by barrels. But his reckless expenditure was naturally not without its effect on the estate, and his son, Boris Alexeievitch, on coming into possession of it, found it much encumbered. Nevertheless, the property was so enormous, that it was impossible to squander it all in two generations. Boris did his best towards that result, and "lived as if he had been engaged to ruin the estate," but the task was too great for him. He went through life like a fine old Russian gentleman, all of the olden time, and died of indigestion, after a sumptuous dinner at his club. His successor, Daniel Borisovitch, inherited three thousand "souls." He endeavoured at first to mend the fortunes of the family, but that was impossible, especially as the new *seigneur* had himself expensive tastes, or rather ideas. He lived for many years in France with Prince Vorontsoff's embassy, fell into the same mysticism with which the Emperor Alexander was inspired by Madame de Krudener, subscribed large sums of money to masonic lodges, and to the Russian Bible Society, and thus got rid of about eight hundred souls. The daughter of the interesting Daniel, the Princess Natalie Danielovna, on the death of her parent, set off

to take the waters; and from Germany proceeded to Italy, where she lived twenty-five years. When a box enclosing the remains of the princess was forwarded from Rome to Zaboria, the family coffers contained the sum of twelve roubles and fifty copeiks, and the debts of the estate were reckoned at about a million. The defunct had no near relations, and among the distant ones there were none who loved her sufficiently to accept Zaboria, and with it her Italian debts. The end of the affair was this. The estate was brought to the hammer, the son of a former waiter at the village tavern became the proprietor of the mansion and land of the once illustrious Princes of Zaboria, and the creditors of the princess were paid sixty-five copeiks in the rouble—that is to say, sixty-five per cent. "O Gedemine * and Minnegoul," exclaims the author, "how did you receive the last scion of your noble and prolific race, the Princess Natalie Danielovna? Prince Alexis Yourivitch, too, how did you welcome her, my father? How you must have regretted you did not meet your great grand-daughter in *this* world, where you would have dealt with her after your own fashion!"

* The best Russian families are descended either from Ruric, the Norman (or his companions), or from Gedemine, the Lithuanian.

CHAPTER VII.

POLITICAL COMEDIES.

THE Russian calendar is twelve days behind ours. How far is Russia behind us in other respects? The question is not answered very easily; for in some things we are centuries ahead, in others only a few years, in others a single season, while in one or two comparatively unimportant matters (such as decimal coinage and extramural cemeteries and slaughter-houses), we have been preceded by the yet undeveloped empire which we are in the habit of styling semi-barbarous. The peasants of Russia are very far indeed behind ours—several centuries, if we may judge by the period of our enfranchisement of the serfs; but they are also far from being in the position of the French peasants before the Revolution, and in material prosperity are quite on an equality with the labouring classes of most other European nations. We believe that no such official corruption as is to be found in Russia ever existed in England at all. In England, it is true, candidates for parliamentary honours bribe voters; but if there were parliaments in Russia, voters having petitions to present would bribe members. In Russia judges take bribes almost openly, and Russian writers quite openly accuse them of it. The most desperate Chartist and revolutionist in England would not suspect an English judge of such a practice; nevertheless in Fielding's time, there were magistrates who were guilty of it, and magisterial venality is quite a common subject of jest in Smollett's novels. In France, in Beaumarchais' time, it was customary for suitors to pay visits to the members of the tribunal which had to try their cause: this is still the practice in Russia. There were serfs in Prussia until

1811. There were serfs in Hungary until 1848, and, by all accounts, they were far worse off than those of any part of Russia. In France, until the Revolution, capital offenders were broken on an iron frame with an iron bar (as described by Mercier in the *Tableau de Paris*), and these executions occurred frequently. In Russia the punishment of the knout was similar to this; but no such punishment has been inflicted since the accession of the present emperor. In the Austrian and English military services, culprits are still flogged as they are in Russia. In our army, it is true, we have no running the gauntlet or flogging through the ranks; but Captain Marryat describes flogging through the fleet as it took place during his time; and even now, in Australia, disobedient convicts are beaten within an inch of their lives, and occasionally die under their punishment. Juvenile offenders, and persons of any age who shoot bits of tobacco-pipe at the Queen, are sentenced by the magistrates to be "privately whipped;" and juvenile offenders of the upper and middle classes are whipped—less privately—by the head masters of our public schools. In France there is no such thing as flogging, either in the prisons, or in the government schools, or in the army; but the Algerian soldiers, though not flogged, used to be tortured to death (and perhaps are now), by being suspended by the arm from a tree, with the toe of one foot resting on a cannon ball,* and by exposure of the face and eyes to a scorching sun. Corporal punishment, then, is not confined to Russia; but the worst of it is, that in Russia it is frequently inflicted illegally, and merely at the caprice of a proprietor.

To find the equals of the Russian police, we must go back at once to the alguazils of *Gil Blas*. The officials are the curse of Russia; and the worst of all those locusts

* This punishment was called *Le Coq Gaulois* (*vide* a work called "Les Zouaves," which must not be confounded with "Les Zouaves et les Chasseurs de Vincennes").

and scorpions who infest the land are the officials of the police. Not that the Russian *gèndarmerie* in any way annoy travellers as is commonly supposed. Even the passport difficulties are very much exaggerated, thanks to the sheep-like tendency of tourists to follow in one another's footsteps—of which one result has been, that the Russia of the present day is still represented to us as the Russia of a quarter of a century since. The delays attributed to the passport office may, in many cases, be accounted for by the avarice of hotel-keepers, who are determined that the supposed victims of official procrastination shall remain with them as long as possible; but, however that may be, it is quite certain that, just now, a foreigner who speaks the language of the country has less trouble with his "papers" in Russia than in France. The history of my own passport in Russia was simply this. I had to exhibit it on arriving at Cronstadt, and again at the St. Petersburg Custom-house. Then Herr Klee, of the Hôtel de l'Europe, borrowed it for a few hours to get the name "written in" at the district police commissioner's; and the next morning I had to take it myself to Prince Orloff's, now Prince Dolgorouki's, office, where, on exhibiting it and paying a small fee, I received a Russian passport, accompanied by a permission to go to Moscow. At Moscow I had to be "written in" again at the district office, but had not to visit the place myself; and then during six or seven months I went where I pleased, without ever having to show the precious document either at any public institution I happened to visit (such as the Treasury, the Foundling Hospital, the Prison, &c.), or at the Post Office when I wanted my letters, or even on leaving the city to go to the Troitza monastery, a distance of about forty miles. Before leaving for England I had to give notice of my intention to depart, which was duly advertized, and had then to show myself at the Governor-General's office, where I paid half-a-crown for His Excellency's signature, which occupied eight lines,

and was decidedly cheap at the price. I afterwards remained a month at St. Petersburg, without having anything whatever to do with passport authorities, though I, of course, had to exhibit my "papers" at the diligence office when I took my place for the Prussian frontier. In fine, I had to exhibit my passport several times, and on two occasions had to appear with it personally at a public office—which certainly was an inconvenience; but altogether, I had not so much trouble with it as I should have had in France, where you cannot move a step without being called upon to show your ticket-of-leave, and where you must be "written in" at every fresh hotel you go to, and must surrender your certificate altogether on entering a fortified town. And it must be remembered that in France Englishmen are not annoyed about their passports nearly so much as other foreigners.

Neither does the Russian police interfere in your domestic arrangements, as that of Napoleon III. is in the habit of doing. In France it is forbidden to assemble fifty persons in a house without giving notice to the police, who then send their own representative to the entertainment; but there are no such restrictions upon social intercourse in Russia. Nor are the Russian constables or watchmen, who are stationed in every thoroughfare, particularly severe in their enforcement of street discipline. We certainly never saw one of them give a blow, except—when there was a danger of the street being blocked up—to some *isvostchik's* horse; and the abuse which generally followed from the driver seemed to show that he stood in no unnecessary awe of the *boutoschnik's* power. But, on one occasion, when an insolent and partly-intoxicated Russian had been very properly knocked down by an Englishman, we can bear witness that a *boutoschnik* stood by while the floored one received a pecuniary indemnity for the blow; and the amiable, though infamous, *boutoschnik*, in fact, said that money was the only remedy. As the English-

man was going to a ball, and had no wish to pass the night in a *boutka*, he, of course, agreed with the *boutoschnik*, and the matter was settled quite pleasantly, the injured party receiving for a very fine black eye a sum equivalent to one and eightpence. How much of the fifty *copeiks* went into the *boutoschnik's* pocket I am unable to say; but it is quite certain that the guardian of public order profited to some extent by a breach of the peace; and thus do the Russian police find their profit in every crime or misadventure that is brought beneath their notice. If a lodger in an hotel misses anything, and informs the police of his loss, they will make him pay for laying his complaint before them; they will make the hotel-keeper pay for suffering things to be stolen from his hotel; and if they know the thief, they may be at the same time receiving money from *him* in consideration of not taking him into custody. A person of my acquaintance had a book stolen from him, and having traced it to a book-stall, was foolish enough to give the suspected thief into custody. Gladly did the policeman take the thief, gladly did the thief go with the policeman. The loser of the book in the meanwhile had to appear time after time at the police office and to give money on each occasion, until at last he was allowed to withdraw his charge, on payment of two roubles. A Frenchman who lived in the principal commercial street of Moscow, assured me that if he caught any one stealing from his shop (which sometimes happened), he never thought of handing him over to the police. He had done so, he said, too often; for once mixed up with the police, there was no getting rid of them, and to obtain justice was out of the question. "What then do you do with a detected shoplifter?" I asked. "We take him into the room at the back, thrash him, and then kick him out into the street," was the reply. "We know, at all events, we shall not see him again. He is glad to get off so easily—and so are we." This horror of the police is so

great, that a Russian will avoid the body of a dead or dying man, lest the alguazils should see him and accuse him of the murder, with a view to extortion. A friend of mine was in the Troitza restaurant at Moscow one day, when a merchant suddenly fell dead from apoplexy. In an instant the tables near him were deserted. There was no one to untie the expiring man's neckerchief. The first thought of every one was how to escape the police, who would have required the daily attendance of all present for an indefinite period, even if they had not imprisoned them, and affected to regard them as the apoplectic gentleman's assassins. The result of such a system is to degrade men to the level of beasts, and policemen to that of demons. It is difficult to believe that such a state of things can exist in the present day in Russia, or that it can ever have existed anywhere else; but we find instances of it in France (to revert to our parallels) in Montaigne's time; and there can be no doubt that, up to the period of the Revolution, the French police were a terror instead of a protection to the lower orders. "Some peasants," writes Montaigne, "have just come over to warn me, in all haste, that they have found in one of my forests a man covered with a hundred wounds, who called out for water and assistance to get up. But they did not dare go near him, and fled away lest the justice folks should seize them; in which case they would have been treated as it is customary to treat people found near a murdered man, for they had no influence or money to prove their innocence. What can I say to them? It is certain this office of humanity might have brought trouble on them."—(*B. St. John's translation.*)

To finish with the Russian police officer, we will say that he is an authorized robber, and that every one knows it—every one being aware that he "spends half-a-crown out of sixpence a-day," or, to be nearer the truth, in the ratio of five shillings out of threepence. We once saw an *isvostchik* almost in tears because a *kvartalny* (commissary

of the quarter) had caused himself to be driven all over Moscow, and then tendered *twopence* (it reminds one of the good Samaritan) in payment of the fare: of course the driver had no remedy. But the *kvartalny* does not content himself with cheating poor *isvostchiks*, he usually contrives to keep his own equipage—to say nothing of a couple of clerks to do his work—out of £40 a-year; and he extorts money rom every householder, or at all events from every trader, in his district. He will take a present of five or ten roubles because it is his birthday, or because it is your birthday, or because you have a sign over your shop, or because you have a shop without any sign over it. He will let you alone, however, if you happen to be a noble, for nobility in Russia means the privilege of being treated like a human being of intelligence and feeling, and of treating others as if they were nothing of the kind.*

Less obnoxious to the community, but equally base with the police, are those officials, military and civil, who, even in the face of an invasion, have not sufficient patriotism to abstain from plundering their Government. Thus we hear of captains of steamers charging so much a-day for coals, while the vessels were in harbour with the fires out. The bombardment of Sweaborg is said to have been quite a *fête* for certain store-keepers, who obtained indemnities for stores that *might* have been destroyed, but which, in fact, had never been laid in. Some of the Crimean commissaries are accused of having sold their hospital lint to the allied armies—an accusation which is probably untrue, but of which the

* Nevertheless, we do not believe that this latter privilege is much abused. The nobles are the only highly-educated class in the empire, and naturally all the men of genius that Russia has produced (with the exception of Kaltzoff, the peasant poet) have been nobles. The eminent writers who contribute to the Russian reviews articles on legal and administrative reforms, and on the emancipation of the serfs, are nobles. They have serfs of their own, but they did not wait for the emperor's *oukaz* to proclaim the evils and miseries of serfdom.

mere circulation from mouth to mouth is sufficiently discreditable, proving, as it does, that the act is considered to come within the limits of possibility.

This corruption of the officials was known long since to be the great malady of Russia—we were about to call it a cancer, but it is spread over the whole body; let us rather style it a leprosy, and, like a leprosy it has been pronounced incurable. Nicholas, with all his energy, could do nothing to cure the disease, though we must remember that it was under his reign that its diagnosis was first drawn up by the Doctor in Literature, Nicholas Gogol. Fancy what a task the exhibition of Russian official corruption must have been! Every form of extortion and baseness crammed together within the limits of a five-act comedy! The cleansing of the Augean stables was nothing to it: this was a far dirtier work, for it was the collection of Augean filth into one heap; nor until the advent of the present Emperor was the river of reform ever fairly opened upon it.

Of the history of the Russian stage—it dates only from the middle of the last century—we shall speak in another chapter; at present we wish only to call attention to the two most remarkable comedies that Russia has produced; viz. "The General Inspector" (*Revizor*), by Gogol; and "Grief from Wit" (*Gore ot Ouma*), by Griboiedoff. These comedies, though entirely different in conception and execution, have the same groundwork—the vices of the Russian official system; and both are written with a serious definite object, such as can be found in no other dramatic works, except, perhaps, Beaumarchais' "Marriage of Figaro," which is, in fact, a pamphlet in the dramatic form. In most countries the press, as an organ of criticism, is in advance of the stage; but in Russia, until the present reign, the stage has been in advance of the press.

Revizor is in prose, and essentially dramatic; *Gore ot Ouma* is in verse, and essentially lyrical. The prose writer,

pursuing a strictly objective method, shows us his officials stealing, cringing, and tyrannizing, without indulging in one cry of indignation, without introducing one honest character into his piece, to tell the others how contemptible they are. "I have laughed with my bitter laugh," says the inscription on Gogol's tomb in the Daniloffsky cemetery, near Moscow; but after the representation of *Revizor*, the public thought the piece so amusing, that the author felt called upon to explain in a preface, that "behind this laughter there were burning tears." In our edition of the play the only preface is this proverb, which is printed on the title-page, "You must not blame the looking-glass if your face is crooked."

On the other hand, the poet Griboiedoff, though possessing many dramatic qualities, does not treat his subject in a truly dramatic style. His personages do not act, they discuss; and in the one good character, who declaims against all the rest, we see the author himself, as in the base and stupid ones we see the author again, only he is speaking ironically.

The only *moral* gratification the spectator derives from the representation of *Revizor* is that of seeing a host of greedy, fraudulent officials taken in through their very anxiety to cheat or bribe into collusion a general inspector, who ultimately turns out to be no general inspector at all. In *Gore ot Oumà*, in which we see the effect of the official system on a single independent, noble-minded young man, who declines to enter "the service," the hero lashes every vice as he points it out.

But, in *Revizor*, the author does not breathe a syllable against cheating and bribery; he contents himself with *showing* us how terribly every official cheats, and bribes, and takes bribes. We see the villains at their work, and the work is so nefarious that we feel that, after all, Gogol is right: there is nothing to be said. He has exposed a huge social sore, but he is not a dealer in platitudes, to tell you that he objects to sores. There it is, such as it

is, and it is for the state-surgeon to cauterize it at any risk, or it will destroy the patient.

The plot of Gogol's piece may be told in a few words. Khlestakoff, a young man in the government service at St. Petersburg, in travelling from the capital to his father's estate, has spent all his money, and, from want of funds, is forced to remain in the distant provincial town in which the scene of the comedy is laid. He is in a miserable inn (of which the interior is represented faithfully enough on the Russian stage); he has no money; and the innkeeper not only refuses to give him credit, but even threatens to complain to the police that he has remained several days at his hostelry without paying a *copeik*. Now it happens that, in this little town, where each official has his own particular kind of knavery, the postmaster reads all the letters, as a matter of course; their contents, in fact, form the staple of his conversation, which, as may be expected, is varied and interesting. He even carries the letters about with him, and says to his friends, "Here is a letter from a young man who gives an account of a magnificent ball; I think his description will please you," and so on. This postmaster has ascertained that a general inspector from St. Petersburg is about to visit them: that he is the bearer of secret instructions; and that he is travelling *incognito*. The governor of the town has also been warned of the advent of this terrible man, and all the officials of the place meet, in order to devise the best means of throwing dust—if necessary gold dust—in his eyes. "I dreamed of rats last night," says the chief; "I knew something fearful was about to happen."

In the first place, the governor recommends a few precautionary measures; for it is barely possible that the government inspector may not be a bribe-taker, but a strict disciplinarian. "If I were you," he says to the superintendent of the hospital, "I should give my patients clean night-caps. The inspector would, perhaps,

not like to see them looking like sweeps, as they generally do. And I should have an inscription over each bed—in Latin, or any other language—saying when the patient fell ill, or something of that kind. And I would have fewer patients in the hospital, or it will be imagined that they are not treated properly."

"As for the treatment," replies the superintendent, "I have arranged all that with the doctor. The simpler the treatment the better. If a man dies, he dies; if he gets well, he gets well. We imitate nature. Besides, how can the doctor speak to the patients about their illnesses when he does not understand a word of Russian?"

Here the German doctor utters an unintelligible sound.

"And you," continues the governor, addressing the judge, "would it not be a good idea to get your court put in order? You keep poultry in your rooms. The rearing of poultry is certainly a very meritorious occupation; but—I don't know—I think a law-court, you understand, is not the place. Then in the audience-room there is a hunting-whip on the desk among the papers. I know you are fond of hunting, and you are quite right; but you might as well remove the hunting-whip, and you can put it back on the desk when the inspector has gone. You have other faults, too; of course every one has; Providence has so ordained it, whatever the Voltairians may say—but really you receive too many presents of hounds!"

"Hounds!" replies the judge. "Now, really, what are a few dogs? If a man accepts a fur cloak, worth five hundred roubles, or a cashmere shawl for his wife, it is a different thing!"

"Is it?" rejoins the governor, angrily. "Well! shall I tell you why you accept presents of dogs? It's because you don't believe in God. Whatever I may be, I have a religion; but you—when you talk about the

formation of the world, you make my hair stand on end."

The local college is about as well attended to as the hospital and the law-court; the roads are out of order; the streets are not paved; the shopkeepers have been, for years past, forced to make unheard-of presents to the governor on his name's-day (and he contrives to have two name-days every year); and recently a soldier's wife, who, as a free woman, is not liable to summary corporal punishment, has been flogged. The officials are trembling, quarrelling, and reproaching one another,—"You take so much; I only take so much; *you steal too much for your place;*" and so on, when suddenly a provincial gossip enters with the information that there is a gentleman at the hotel who pays nobody.

"Then he must be a government officer of high rank," is the general conviction, and at once a deputation is sent to the inn where Khlestakoff and his servants are staying.

Khlestakoff, hearing the governor of the town announced, concludes that he is about to send him to prison for swindling the hotel-keeper; and here a good scene of equivoque occurs. Khlestakoff begins by accusing his host. He has given him a bad room, infamous dinners, detestable tea.

The governor is very sorry, and suggests that Khlestakoff shall change his residence.

"I understand," says Khlestakoff, indignantly, "you would have me sent to prison. Do you know who I am, sir? Do you know that I am a government officer?"

"He is determined to do his duty," reflects the governor, "and fears that any neglect on his part will be visited with imprisonment. But how angry he is! Some one must have told him that I flogged the soldier's wife, and that I take bribes." And thereupon he explains that he didn't flog the soldier's wife; and that, as for presents,

he has never taken any of much value; besides which, his salary really doesn't suffice to pay his expenses.

The astonished Khlestakoff assures the governor that he does not wish to interfere in his private affairs, and that he is only waiting in the town until he receives money from home.

"How cunning!" says the governor to himself; but he is determined not to be outwitted. "If you want money," he observes, "it is my duty to oblige travellers. Let me lend you two hundred roubles."

"Willingly," replies Khlestakoff.

The governor gives him a roll of notes; and when the young traveller has consented to pocket them without counting them, exclaims aside, "I have done it beautifully! I see that we shall agree. Instead of two hundred roubles I have given him four!"

Ultimately Khlestakoff goes off to the governor's house, where he is fêted, and not only fêted but bribed by every official in the town. He makes love to the governor's wife, and then proposes to the daughter, upon which the governor himself goes nearly mad, and has visions of becoming a general. Henri Monnier's M. Prudhomme, when he fancies he has been promoted to a seat in the cabinet, and sends his wife out to buy a "*portefeuille de ministre*," is nothing to him.

After all the officials have visited the supposed inspector, the merchants of the town contrive to see him. They bring with them loaves of sugar and bottles of brandy, wherewith to propitiate "his most excellent highness the chief of the finances," as they style him. One complains that the governor not only exacts from him clothes for himself and all his family, but that he thinks nothing of taking entire pieces of cloth, of five-and-twenty yards or more, into the bargain. Another merchant complains that, unless he gives various presents to the governor, he is threatened with having a regiment of soldiers billeted upon him. "I cannot beat you,"

the governor says to him, "because the law does not allow it; but I will pay you out my own way." However, there is nothing pathetic in the grief of these victims of the officials. They have become utterly degraded through endless persecution, and the example of their superiors; and when they come to complain of the local officials to the official who has arrived from the capital—to the supposed general inspector—they beat their foreheads on the ground and offer him bribes, that he may punish their tormentor.

Then a poor woman comes in, whose husband has been taken for a soldier. "It was against the law," she says, "for they have no right to take a married man; and, besides, it was the turn of the tailor's son, but his mother gave some money. Then it was another one's turn, but his mother took three pieces of cloth to the governor's wife; so at last they fell upon my unfortunate husband."

Here Khlestakoff can do nothing. He can accept presents, but he cannot redress injuries. Then other petitioners arrive; and at last the very patients in the hospital have risen from their beds to complain of their ill-treatment and neglect, and actually make their appearance at the wing! But here the scene closes, for the horrible is not admitted even into tragedies—and *Revisor*, it must be remembered, is a comedy.

When Khlestakoff has left the town (promising to return in a few days) the director of the post-office comes in with a letter, which, according to custom, he has opened. It is a communication from Khlestakoff himself to a friend in St. Petersburg, and the postmaster is naturally anxious to see what the inspector-general says of himself and his friends. They all assemble, as in the first act, and the letter is produced.

"How could he dare to open the letter of such an important personage?" say the other officials, admiringly.

"Personage? He is no personage at all," replies the postmaster; "the deuce knows what he is!"

Here the governor becomes indignant. "Do you know that he is my future son-in-law?" he exclaims; "and that I am going to be a general? and that I will send you to Siberia if you speak in that manner?"

"Siberia is a long way off," returns the postmaster, calmly. "Read for yourself."

The next scene, imitated in form from the "Misanthrope," is admirably comic. The letter contains an insulting phrase for every one. The governor, finding that he is exposed, is skipping a sentence, when the postmaster takes the letter from him and reads. Then, when the latter appears to be showing a similar leniency to himself, the document is taken from him by the superintendent of the hospital, who stops, however, when *his* name is mentioned; and so on through the entire assembly.

"To think that *I* should have been taken in!" exclaims the governor with charming *naïveté*. "I, who have been thirty years in the service, and have had to deal with the cunningest scoundrels in the world! Why, I have done three intendants in my time—yes, three intendants; and to do an intendant is something!"

Then the question arises, "Who first said that this swindler was a general inspector?" "It was you." "No; it was Bobtchinski." "No; it was Dobtchinski." And an unfortunate man named Dobtchinski is being blamed for the whole disaster, when suddenly a courier appears, and announces the arrival of the real inspector, who wishes to see the officials forthwith. The effect of this message may be imagined, and the curtain falls upon the general consternation.

Does it not appear strange that such a comedy should be licensed by the censor? To those who think that the Russian Government looks with favour upon vice and corruption, it must appear strange indeed; but it is a fact that dramatic writers have more liberty in Russia

than in any other country in Europe, and that all the great satirists the country has produced have been countenanced and encouraged by the State.

Let us now turn to Griboiedoff's *Gore ot Ouma*, of which an English translation, by Nicolas Bernardaky, has lately been published.

Gore ot Ouma, being interpreted, means "Grief from Wit"—not, exclusively, the wit which shines in epigrams, but "wit" as the word was understood in the eighteenth century; and the play, while exhibiting an animated satirical picture of Moscow fashionable life in 1823, points out the fate which inevitably awaits a man of honesty and perception who is surrounded by a society of rogues and fools. Tchatsky, the hero, is a misanthrope, but, at the same time, an ardent, enthusiastic young man, who perhaps, under more favourable circumstances, would not have been a misanthrope at all; though we suspect that, as Sophia, the heroine of the piece, observes, "he is happiest where men are most ridiculous." He has very little in common with Molière's "Misanthrope," who, compared with Griboiedoff's hero, is a model of patience. Alceste moralizes, and delivers lengthened disquisitions, while Tchatsky is a bitter satirist, and declaims the most elaborate tirades. They, however, resemble one another in this point, that each of them tires his mistress—in the case of the Frenchman, by continual sermonizing; in that of the Russian, by unceasing raillery. There is one very fine idea in the Russian comedy. The intellectual, warm-hearted Tchatsky is at length declared to be mad by the company of dolts and knaves against whose vices and meannesses he has in vain directed his satire—just as the patients of a lunatic asylum might resolve unanimously that their visiting physician was insane.

The plot of *Gore ot Ouma* is very simple. Tchatsky, returning from his travels, finds, after three years' absence from Moscow, that Sophia, whose affection he had once enjoyed, no longer cares for him. The high-minded

but unpleasantly satirical young traveller, who has too much independence to enter the government service, where cringing and flattery alone can procure him advancement, is supplanted by a model functionary named Moltchaline, who is silent before his superiors, lest by too much talking he may chance to utter some unbecoming remarks; who fawns systematically upon those above him, and makes love to the daughter of the chief of his department, merely as a matter of business. "My father, on his death-bed," says the cold-blooded secretary, "counselled me to ingratiate myself with all I came in contact with—with the owner of the house where I lodged, with my superiors in the service, with the servant who brushed my clothes, with the porter who opened the door, and with the very dog of the porter, that it might not snarl at my heels." Sophia really loves Moltchaline, while Moltchaline loves Lisa, the *soubrette* of the piece; "and I," says Lisa, "fear love as I do the devil; yet how could any one help loving Petroushka the butler?"

Famoussoff, Sophia's father, is a servile functionary of high rank, who, in his best moments, utters commonplaces of a somewhat florid description; while the homely stupidities pronounced by his friend Skalozoub, a military pedant, are principally remarkable for their *naïveté*. The play altogether belongs to satire rather than to comedy. There is a great deal that is terrible, but not much that is laughable, in Griboiedoff's picture of Moscow society thirty-five years since. As a specimen of the two styles combined, we may give the following speech by Famoussoff, the *laudator temporis acti*, availing ourselves of M. Bernardaky's prose translation. After upbraiding Tchatsky for not entering the government service, the old functionary continues thus:—

"You young fellows are all proud alike; but you ought to ask how your fathers acted. It would be much better to learn from those who are older than yourselves—from me, for example, or my late uncle, Maxim Petro-

vitch. His meals were served not only on silver but on gold plate, with a hundred servants in waiting. He was covered with decorations, and always drove a carriage and four. He passed his whole life at court—and such a court! How different from the present one! It was the court of the Empress Catherine. At that time all the courtiers weighed at least forty poods. Even if you bowed to the earth, they never honoured you with a recognition. . . . . As for my uncle, he had a serious aspect and a haughty bearing; but in the presence of his superiors he could bend his body into a circle. Once, at a great ball at the palace, he slipped, and fell so effectually as nearly to break his neck. The old man groaned deeply, and was honoured with an imperial smile. The Empress deigned to laugh—what do you think he did? He rose, shook himself, made an effort to bow, and fell again—but this time intentionally. The laughter was continued! A third time he performed the same feat. What is your opinion of that? We considered it ingenious, for by those falls he rose. . . . On account of exploits of this kind, who was always invited to the imperial card-tables, and favoured with the most gracious words? Maxim Petrovitch! Who was always treated with the greatest respect? Maxim Petrovitch! I am not joking. Who used to scatter titles and pensions? Maxim Petrovitch! Yes! and who among you young fellows could have held a candle to him?

"*Tchatsky.* You speak the truth. . . . That was, indeed, a century of fear and servility. All was done under the mask of zeal for the sovereign. (I make no allusion to your uncle; we will leave his ashes to repose in peace.) However, now we find few amateurs ready to break their necks for the amusement of the public; and although there are always men prone to baseness, yet in our days the fear of ridicule deters them, and takes the place of honest shame. That is why advancement is so slow in the service."

"*Fa.* Good Lord! He is a Carbonaro!"

Such satire, which in the original is given in ringing verse, would be tolerated in no other country in Europe except England. Certainly no one who has witnessed the performance of Beaumarchais' masterpiece at the Théâtre Français, since the re-establishment of "order" in Paris, and who remembers how Figaro's celebrated soliloquy is mutilated, can suppose that such scenes or such speeches would be permitted on the stage in France.

Here is another significant extract from an admirable scene in the third act:—

"*Skalozoub.* Shall I tell you a piece of good news? There is a general rumour that in all lyceums, schools, and gymnasiums, nothing save military exercises will be taught, and that books will be reserved for great occasions.

"*Famoussoff.* No, Sergèi Sergeitch! If we mean to reach the evil at its root, we must throw all the books into the fire.

"*Ska.* Not at all! There are different kinds of books; but if I were appointed censor, I should certainly be inexorable with regard to fables. I should dread them as the evil one. They are full of jests about lions and eagles. Say what you will, though animals, still they are potentates."

The original has it, "Though animals, they are still *Tsars;*" and it is a fact, that in Kriloff's fables nearly every abuse in Russia is attacked in some shape or other.

After making use of M. Bernardaky's translation, it may appear ungracious to find fault with it; but there is no concealing the fact that it needs correcting, and it is sufficiently good to be worth the trouble. It certainly conveys an idea of the substance of the original, though the style all but perishes in the double translation from Russian into English, and from verse into prose. As a general rule, M. Bernardaky endeavours to render his author literally; but in the low-comic portions of the piece, he appears to aim at Anglicising the dialogue, after

the manner of our "adapters" from the French: thus Lisa declares that she is "in a nice mess," and Tchatsky is said to be "as mad as a March hare."

Independently of its other qualities, *Gore ot Ouma* possesses great merit in a theatrical or spectacular point of view. There is a scene in the last act, where the company at a ball cross the stage in groups as their carriages are announced, which is full of animation, and which is always highly successful in representation. "In general," says a Russian critic, "we think very little about enlivening the action, and of impressions from the stage, forgetting that it is not for nothing that a drama is called a spectacle, and that it has to be shown to the audience. Hence many of our comedies are kinds of 'dialogues of the dead.' You have not the real world or living beings before you, but shadows with neither face nor body."

The end of the second act is also very novel and effective. Tchatsky is declaiming one of his long tirades against the imitation of foreign manners. His audience disappear one by one, until, after an unusually violent outburst, he suddenly turns round and finds himself without a listener. The men and women he would reform are seen waltzing in the background, and the curtain falls.

We may add that these scenes, like most of the characters, are quite episodical. "They can be taken out, changed, or added to," says the Russian critic from whom we have already quoted, "and you will not detect a gap or an addition." In this respect the piece resembles the comedies of Von Vesen; and it has been remarked that, in the hero himself, there is a likeness to Von Vesen's Staradoum. Tchatsky is, in fact, one of the variations of a type that is constantly re-appearing in Russian literature—the independent man struggling against the network of officialism that envelopes him. Among the purely episodical scenes alluded to, we may mention that

there are several in which the imitation of the French is ridiculed, and one which contains an amusing account of a midnight club, established for the discussion of English poetry and English politics.

The dialogue is full of epigrams, written in metre of the mostvaried description. In fact, there are as many different forms of verse in *Gore ot Ouma* as there are airs in an opera. Two of the numerousamusing conceits are easily turned into English rhyme. Famoussoff, hearing that Sophia sits up all night reading French novels, exclaims :—

"Thanks to French books, her eyes she seldom closes,
While I o'er Russian ones have frequent dozes."

Lisa, speaking of an old maid who had been driven to despair by the departure of a young Frenchman, remarks :—

"When the young Frenchman went away,
In vain her grief she strove to hide;
In three short days her hair turned gray,
—She'd quite forgot to have it dyed."

As the lives of Russian literary men have, for the most part, been made known to us by authors who have had special reasons for detesting the Russian Government, some account of the career of an eminent poet like Griboiedoff would have been very acceptable, coming from the pen of an impartial writer like M. Bernardaky. Mr. Herzen, in his work *Du Développement des Idées Révolutionnaires en Russie*, after stating that in Russia "a dark and terrible fate is reserved for any one who dares to raise his head above the level traced by the imperial sceptre," proceeds to give a list of authors whom "an inexorable fatality has thrust into the tomb." In company with Poushkin and Lermontoff (who fell in duels of their own seeking), with Venevetinoff "killed by so-

ciety," Koltzoff "killed by his family," Belinsky "killed by hunger and misery," and Ryleieff "hung by Nicholas,"* we find Griboiedoff "assassinated at Teheran." The reader naturally imagines that the assassination of Griboiedoff was somehow or other connected with his intellectual superiority; and the reader is right. Griboiedoff, the brilliant poet and satirist, having already served with distinction in Persia, under Paskievitch, was appointed minister plenipotentiary to the court of Teheran, where he was killed during an insurrection; so that it may be asserted, without positively transgressing the bounds of truth, that Griboiedoff would probably not have been murdered unless he had written the best comedy in the Russian language.

Poushkin has left an account of his meeting with the remains of his brother poet, as they were being conveyed through Armenia to the capital of Georgia:—

"Two oxen yoked to an *araba*," says the author of *Oneygin*, "ascended the steep road; several Georgians were accompanying it. 'Where do you come from?' I asked them. 'From Teheran.' 'What are you conveying?' 'Griboiedoff.' It was the corpse of the murdered Griboiedoff which they were taking to Tiflis. I never thought to have met our Griboiedoff thus. I had parted from him the year before in St. Petersburg, when he was about to set off for Persia. He was melancholy, and troubled with a strange presentiment. I endeavoured to tranquillize him, but he said to me, '*Vous ne connaissez pas ces gens-là: vous verrez qu'il faudra jouer des couteaux.*'

* Victor Hugo and Lamartine have fought duels, and might have been shot; so might Byron and Moore, and nearly all the writers of the last generation. Armand Carrel *was* killed in a duel. Gilbert and Hippolyte Moreau died of hunger. Gérard de Nerval, in the deepest poverty, hanged himself. Gros, the painter, cut his throat. So did Léopold Robert. So did our Haydon. Such instances (which might easily be multiplied) prove nothing against the government of a country. As for Ryleieff, he was hanged, not as a poet, but as a conspirator and a shedder of blood.

He thought the cause of the bloodshed would be the death of the Shah, and the breaking out of a civil war among his seventy sons; but the aged Shah is still living, and the prophetic words of Griboiedoff have nevertheless been fulfilled. He perished beneath the Persian daggers, the victim of ignorance and perfidy; and his mutilated corpse, after having been for three days the plaything of the mob, could only be recognized by one of the hands which bore the mark of a pistol-shot. I made the acquaintance of Griboiedoff in 1817. His melancholy disposition, his keen wit, his good heart, his very weaknesses and vices—the inevitable attendants of our poor human nature—everything about him was singularly fascinating. Born with ambition equal to his genius, he was for a long time entangled in the meshes of petty wants. His abilities as a statesman were never brought into play; his poetic talent was not recognized; even his cool, dazzling bravery, remained for some time under suspicion. Some of his friends knew his worth, though they saw the smile of distrust—that silly, intolerable smile which is assumed by mediocrity when the name of a very remarkable man happens to be mentioned. People believe only in fame and do not understand that among them there may be some Napoleon who has not even the command of a light-infantry company, or a second Descartes, who has not yet published a line in the 'Moscow Telegraph.' . . . Perhaps our respect for fame has its origin in self-love, as we assist with our own voices in creating it. . . . The life of Griboiedoff was sometimes over-clouded—the result of his fiery passions and of imperious circumstances. But he felt the necessity of making up accounts with his youth once and for ever. He suddenly changed his mode of life, bade farewell to St. Petersburgh, and with it to his holiday existence, and went off to Georgia, where he remained eight years in great retirement and incessant study."

It was during his residence in Georgia that Griboiedoff gained that knowledge of the Oriental languages which

afterwards distinguished him. There, too, he wrote his *Gore ót Ouma*—at Tiflis, in 1822. It was produced about a year afterwards, and the author at once took his rank among the first poets of Russia. After the great success of his comedy, Griboiedoff appears to have remained some time in Moscow and St. Petersburg, contributing to various periodicals, and among others to Ryleieff's "Polar Star." It was in the "Polar Star" that the author of *Gore ot Ouma* first published his translation of Göthe's "Prologue to Faust." Shortly before the insurrection of 1825 (after which Ryeleieff, who was one of the five leaders, was executed) Griboiedoff visited Georgia for the second time, and soon after his arrival in Tiflis married the sister of Prince Chavchavadzey, the Georgian nobleman whose family were carried off a few years since by Shamil's mountaineers, and detained for nearly eight months in the Caucasian chief's seraglio,* After conducting the negotiations with the Persians at the close of the war of 1827, Griboiedoff was chosen by Paskievitch to present the treaty of peace to the Emperor, on which occasion he received four thousand pieces of gold, the Order of St. Anne, and the rank of councillor of state (corresponding to that of colonel in the army). Exactly one year had elapsed since Griboiedoff's presentation of the treaty to the Emperor, when the news was received in St. Petersburg of his assassination at Teheran. He perished in the thirty-fifth year of his age, leaving behind him, together with several dramatic productions that are now nearly forgotten, one masterpiece, which still fills the Moscow and St. Petersburg theatres whenever it is performed, though the state of society which it depicts has, happily, in a great measure passed away.

* See Captivity of Two Russian Princesses in the Caucasus, translated from the Russian by H. Sutherland Edwards. Smith and Elder.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOCIETY AND THE STAGE.

PEOPLE amuse themselves in St. Petersburg and Moscow very much as they do in other European capitals. The upper classes are fond of the opera and of balls. The lower classes are fond of drinking. The middle classes unite in a moderate way the tastes of the other two. Then there is a literary and artistic class, of which all the distinguished members belong also, either naturally or by adoption, to the highest, but which may at the same time be looked upon as forming a class apart. It is a fact that even the "Bohemian" exists in Russia, though he has not yet found a Whitty or a Murger to describe him. Certainly Paneeff, in his "Experiments with Russian Snobs," introduces a family of artists, in whom some decided traits of Bohemianism are distinguishable; but it is a known characteristic of the true Bohemian to despise family life. However, I knew a couple of Bohemians living in Moscow whom Schaunart himself would not have disavowed. They even possessed that quality which can alone entitle the Bohemian to the slightest consideration—namely, great talent. I saw a "Moonlight View of the Kremlin from the Banks of the Moskva" by one of them, and a representation of the "Emperor's Banquet to the People," together with some very humorous caricatures, by the other, which told plainly that they would in due time desert their camp; and, in fact, the former is now painting for the court, while the latter is married, industrious, and successful. I attach some importance to the fact that Bohemians are to be found in Russia, because it seems to denote the existence of a larger artistic body than the country is generally supposed to possess. It must, at the same

time, be remembered that the artists of Russia in general belong to a lower class of society than the authors. A painter like Bruloff or Bruni would be in the same position as a poet like Poushkin; but Russia has produced very few distinguished artists, whereas she has produced a great many justly-distinguished poets and prose writers; and thus, perhaps, it has come to pass that (except by a small circle in the capitals) it is considered undignified for a member of a good family to occupy himself with art, except purely as a relaxation. It should not be inferred from this that artists are not honoured, and that art is not encouraged in Russia, but merely that the profession of painter is one that is not adopted by members of the upper classes. A great many noblemen publish books, but, as in England, none exhibit pictures.

As very few gentlemen, then, become artists, there are a good many artists who find it difficult to become gentlemen (in the conventional sense of the term); and who, possessing no education but the special one which enables them to pursue their profession, are quite unfitted for a society in which, in spite of the national movement now taking place, it is still held that ignorance of the French language implies ignorance of the ordinary courtesies of life. Thus they are driven to associate exclusively with one another. If their position or want of acquirements prevents them mixing with the nobility, they cannot, and will not, have anything to do with the merchants, who are to them what the *bourgeois* is to the French *rapin*, or the *Philister* to the German student. As the great satirists of Russia make war upon the abuses of the official system, and the imitation of foreign manners, so the minor ones devote themselves to the castigation of the merchant, with his avarice, his ostentation, and his vulgarity.

M. Jourdain and George Dandin have long been impossible characters in England and France; or, if they exist, they are no longer considered ridiculous. George Dandin,

in England, would marry an earl's daughter, and the countess would be very civil to him, and ask him for allotments of railway shares; while M. Jourdain would explain to his child's suitor that it *was* necessary he should be a nobleman to aspire to her hand; and no one would see anything laughable in the assertion, if the father of the young lady were really as rich as Molière's hero is supposed to be. But in Russia there is a very broad distinction between the gentleman and the trader, which extends even to costume. Twenty years ago the richest merchants in St. Petersburg wore beards, and caftans, and shoes made of bark. That is not the case now; and I myself dined in Moscow with a merchant of the first guild, whose clothes might have been made by the best tailor in London or Paris; who had three or four kinds of French wine at table; whose daughters played airs from *Ernani* and *Rigoletto*, and spoke French nearly as well as their French governess; who had a *suite* of five spacious and admirably-furnished reception-rooms on the ground-floor of his house, which was quite apart from his place of business; and who, I am sure, had only allowed a few national dishes to form part of the elegant repast that was served to us out of consideration to my natural curiosity as a foreigner on the subject of Russian cookery. There was nothing that was ridiculous, and a great deal that was becoming, in the appearance and manners of this merchant; and the only sign I could discover of the bad taste said to be so characteristic of his class in Russia, was in the common-place engravings with which his walls were hung. These productions were inferior in execution to the worst woodcuts that ever appeared in an illustrated paper, and represented such scenes as the passage of a river in the Caucasus; or the vengeance of a party of Russian soldiers on some Turks who had just assassinated a Greek priest; or the heroic efforts of some Russian sailors to save some other Turks from a sinking boat while the Turkish batteries on the shore did not cease for

a moment to fire upon them. They belonged to that class of pictures which are usually offered for sale in the streets and under gateways, and which find most of their purchasers among soldiers and servant-maids. Probably the merchant had spent some two or three thousand pounds on the furniture of the *suite* of rooms in which he received his friends (his piano alone must have cost upwards of two hundred), while the whole sum he had expended on pictures could scarcely have amounted to half a sovereign; and what a half sovereign's worth he had selected! Doubtless the subjects of the engavings interested him; but it never seemed to have occurred to him that the execution was a matter of any importance whatever. However, this merchant, with his shaven chin, and in his suit of black cloth, was far from being a type of his class. He was a polite, intelligent man, well informed on all points connected with the commerce of Russia, and an ardent supporter of the reforms at that time known to be contemplated by Alexander II.; and, like every Russian I ever met, a great talker of politics, domestic and foreign. Doubtless many of the next generation of merchants will resemble the one whose acquaintance I made; for though the present race have for the most part received very little instruction themselves, they now send their sons to the government gymnasiums, where, for a small annual payment, a very good education is obtained. In the meanwhile the Russian merchant, as he exists, is a fine subject for comedy.

Nearly all those who do not wear the caftan (which many still retain) have adopted a sort of compromise between it and the frock-coat. Very few have even abandoned their beards, — in fact, none but some rich members of the first guild, who are already half ashamed of being merchants, and who may be expected to send their sons into either the military or the civil service. It is this weakness and vanity of the merchants (as Prince Dolgorouki has well pointed out in his "Hand-book to

some of the principal Russian Families") that causes their order to be viewed with so much contempt. It must be remembered that it is not from any narrow pride, and from a mere contempt for persons who have to work for their living, that they are looked down upon, for there are many English merchants established in various parts of the empire with whom the nobles associate on terms of equality; the grand dukes have often been seen walking down the Nevsky arm-in-arm with some of them; and every Englishman who has lived in Russia knows that there is no country in which tutors and governesses are treated with more consideration. But, unfortunately, it is easy to get ennobled in Russia; and, instead of remaining to give influence and dignity to the body from which they have sprung, the sons of rich traders are encouraged by their fathers to aim at becoming noblemen and landholders. After serving eight years in the ranks as a *junker* (a nobleman who has not passed his examination at a military school serves only two), the son of a merchant is made an officer, acquires the privileges of personal nobility, and, if he attains the rank of colonel, becomes an hereditary nobleman, and can purchase an estate. Formerly, hereditary nobility was attained with a lower rank; but, we believe, the present Emperor intends to raise still higher the grade which confers it. However that may be, the formation of a respectable and powerful middle class has hitherto been much interfered with in the manner we have pointed out; and so notorious is this ambition of the Russian merchant to rise to a sphere for which he is quite unfitted, that it is constantly made the subject of ridicule on the Russian stage. Indeed, for several years past, scarcely a comedy has been played in Moscow or St. Petersburg in which the weakness in question is not incidentally introduced, even if it does not, as is frequently the case, form the main subject of the piece.

The merchants are not only less civilized, in the ordinary

sense of the term—that is to say, less educated and less accomplished—than the nobles, which is what we expect to find in all countries, but they are also less natural. We know that numbers of the middle classes in England are afflicted with a rage for imitating those above them; that they pay visits at what was their fathers' tea-time, and dine at their fathers' supper-time; frequent the Opera under pretence of liking Donizetti and Verdi; make autumnal tours through countries of which the language is a mystery to them; but, for all that, our middle classes, as a mass, have English habits; and their lives are more natural than those of their social superiors. They have fewer and less unhealthy amusements; they rise and go to bed earlier; their marriages are for the most part marriages of inclination, not to say love. It is not for *their* wives and daughters that Miss Rachel goes forth every evening in the season with a little box of precious dyes and rare dentifrices and lip-salves that are warranted not to wash off; nor that Bond-street perfumers announce their "blooms" and their "*blancs de perle.*" Now, in Russia, whatever virtues the middle classes may possess, it is quite certain they cannot boast of that of simplicity. The women of the upper classes (except in rare instances, as in other countries) do not paint; the merchants' wives, however, as a general rule, *do;* and it is easy to see that their complexions are false, if only by the discoloration of their teeth, which, owing to the effect of certain metallic pigments, are often very nearly black. This barbarous system of face-painting appears to be a relic of the supremacy of the Tartars, about which so little is known, but which must have had more effect than the Russians willingly admit; though, at the same time, infinitely less than is supposed by the Western nations. Miçkievciz, half unwilling, perhaps, to admit that one branch of the great Slavonian family could cordially detest another, used to taunt the Russians with being Mongols; while the Oriental caftan and shaven head

of the Polish nobles (long after the Western costume had been forced by Peter upon the noblemen of Russia) made Archdeacon Coxe, and other travellers of the last century, assign to them a Tartar origin. Mickievicz's sneer was intended specially for the upper classes of Russia; and he firmly maintained that all the virtue of the country was to be found among the peasantry, who, throughout Great Russia, and the greater part of Little Russia, are pure Slavonians. However that may be, it is certain that there is scarcely an illustrious name in Russia which can be traced to the Tartars. Almost the only one is that of Rostopchin, which has been rendered still more celebrated by the poetic genius of the present countess than by the patriotic incendiarism of her father-in-law, who was governor of Moscow in 1812. The best families in Russia are either of Slavonian, Lithuanian, or, above all, Norman origin; and a large number of the men who have most distinguished themselves in Russian history are the lineal descendants of Rurik or his companions. Most of them have been men of action, but the poet Poushkin is also reckoned among them.

But to return to the merchants. Another vestige of the Tartar domination in Russia, then, is found in the unwillingness of some of the merchants' wives to dance, or to appear at public assemblies, or to allow any one to see their hair, which they carefully envelope in handkerchiefs. Moreover, it is impossible to enter a large *traktir*, or restaurant frequented by merchants, (we mean in Moscow, not in St. Petersburg), without being struck by the various Oriental and Mongol characteristics of the place; such, for instance, as the use of the *chibouk*, which is taken ready lighted from the hands of the waiter; the employment of an enormous number of servants; the drinking of a glass of spirits before dinner, but not after it; and the immoderate consumption of tea, of which the Russian merchant—especially if he is making a bargain—will take as many as fifteen or sixteen cups; remaining,

in fact, with his tea-pot and his urn before him (the real Chinese urn, by the bye) through an entire afternoon. Whether or not all classes of the community felt the influence of the Mongols equally, we are unable to say. The merchants may have adopted their peculiar customs either during the subjection of Russia to the Golden Horde, or as a result of their frequent journeyings to Mongolia and the frontiers of China. However that may be, the upper classes, since Peter's time, have gradually been adopting the civilization first of Germany, then of France, and latterly of England, whereas the merchants, as a body, appear to have remained stationary.

Those customs of the merchants that we have already mentioned are, however, as nothing compared with the prejudices which exist among them on the subject of marriage. Among the highest classes there may be state or family reasons which excuse, if they do not justify, the *mariage d'intérêt*; and yet, in Russia, it is only among these that a marriage of inclination ever takes place. "Many of our countrymen," says one of the young countesses in *Gore ot Ouma*, "without thinking any previous warning necessary, improvise relations for us in the shops of our *marchandes de mode*." "Poor fellows!" replies the hero of the piece, "they must bear the reproaches of those who imitate milliners, for having preferred the originals to the copies!" Now, without accepting either of these sarcasms as expressing the literal truth, it may be said that there is a substratum of fact beneath each; and, on the whole, it is creditable to Russia that an independent man like Tchatsky—a true, though perhaps, a rare type—should now and then exist, to be even suspected of the eccentricity sneeringly attributed to him by the woman of fashion. Certainly the merchants are never accused of any such forgetfulness of matrimonial etiquette, for they sell their daughters and buy their sons-in-law, as if they were so much merchandise. We do not say that marriages of love are by any means frequent among the

nobles; but among the merchants they never take place at all.

Ordinarily matrimonial unions in the middle classes are arranged by an intermediary, called a *svakha*, who will find a bride or bridegroom, as may be required; and it is not considered at all necessary or desirable that the young people should be acquainted with one another before their marriage. In a play represented at the Little Theatre in Moscow at the time of the coronation, under the title of "A Russian Wedding of the Olden Time," and which was chiefly remarkable for the richness and variety of the costumes, the bride's face is concealed from the bridegroom until the performance of the marriage ceremony. That is, indeed, the foundation of the whole piece, which turns upon the despair of a young man at being forced by his parents to marry a girl he has never seen, and his joy on discovering, at the last moment, that his betrothed and his *inamorata* are one and the same person.

It would not interest our readers if we were to give the plots of some of the merchant-comedies that we have seen, as their great merit consists in the humour with which the manners and peculiar verbal expression of the class are reproduced. One of the best of the kind is M. Ostroffsky's *Svoi Ludi*, &c. In this comedy there is a merchant's daughter, who, wishing to get married, of course desires to unite herself to what, in England, we should familiarly call "a swell." When a young merchant appears, and asks for her hand, she views him with silent contempt, until, at last, he makes a passionate appeal, and, as an extreme proof of his devotion, exclaims, "I will do anything for you! Tell me to go to a German tailor's and get a fashionable 'coat" (he wears a caftan), "tell me even to shave off my beard, and I will do it!" "I only ask for one proof of affection," says the young lady. "What is it?" demands the swain. "Learn to speak French!"

Besides the comedies which exhibit the vices of officialism

A RUSSIAN WEDDING. PURCHASE OF THE BRIDE. ANCIENT CEREMONY.

and the effect of the official system on the independent man, and those which deal with the absurdities of the merchants, there are some others of larger scope, among which the most remarkable we know is Gogol's "Marriage." In this comedy we have a fine study of the bachelor as a character. A single man of confirmed bachelor habits wishes to get a wife. He does not understand the French language himself, but, of course, insists on marrying a young lady who speaks French. This, however, is merely a detail. The main idea of the piece, and a highly philosophical one it is, is this,—that a bachelor of a certain age must necessarily dread to alter his mode of life to suit that of another person. The chief character of the comedy, who is considered "a good match," after considering the qualifications of a number of marriageable young ladies, who are all anxious to secure him, selects one; but no sooner has he given his word than he repents. He is afraid of the total change that must take place in his habits after he is married. It is not a love-match, for he is a middle-aged man and something more. He reflects; but the bride is coming down stairs in her wedding costume, and there is no time for consideration. The handle of the door moves, and it appears impossible to escape; but the window is open. He leaps into the street, and is saved. You hear him call out to a droshky-driver, "*Isvostchik! isvostchik!*" He has disappeared for ever, and the curtain falls.

Native comedies are not played at the large theatres in Russia, any more than in other European countries, where the opera has half extinguished the drama. In Moscow they are represented at what is called the Little Theatre; in St. Petersburg at the Tsirk, or the Alexander Theatre.

Of course, in Russia, where everything is translated, they translate comedies and vaudevilles from the French. One night as we were going into the Little Theatre in Moscow, we found that Moliere's "MICAHTPOII" was to be played. Another time it was the well-known vau-

deville, "A. Ф."—the French A. F. These Russian characters, which are for the most part Greek, have, to a stranger, quite a burlesque effect, when for the first time he sees them on a play-bill. "Sheridan," for instance, with a rho for an *r*, and a delta for a *d*, looks exceedingly strange. "The School for Scandal," we must add, is one of the stock pieces of the Russian stage; and we have, in a previous chapter, mentioned an article on Sheridan and his writings, which appeared in one of the Russian revie wsin 1854.

Perhaps Russia will some day be celebrated for comedies; but we fancy that, in its leap from semi-barbarism to civilization, it is skipping tragedy altogether, which, as a general rule, appears to be an anterior product. Soumorokoff may have had great poetic genius, but he was an imitator, and in the present day he is not acted.

Before dismissing the subject of the Russian stage, we must mention that many of the rich Russian proprietors have theatres on their estates, a few of which are well appointed in all respects. As the manager is proprietor not only of the theatre, but also of the actors and actresses, he is never troubled with refusals to appear in such and such a part or with such and such a performer; his tenors have never suspicious sore throats, and his dancers enjoy wonderful health. Good chorus and ballet-masters are engaged at those private theatres, and occasionally an accomplished artist is produced. Madame Zeitto, the prima-donna of the Nijni-Novgorod operatic *troupe*, was a serf belonging to the estate of M. S——, at whose theatre she had been "formed." She received a large salary, and paid only the usual "obrok" (ten or twelve roubles a-year) to her seigneur. But the estate passing into other hands, the successful soprano was recalled from Nijni; and it was only by paying a considerable sum to her new proprietor that the merchants of the town could obtain permission for her to remain at the theatre, of which she was the greatest ornament. Now that the provincial towns are gaining importance, and the capital is becoming every

day more easy of access (as well as for other reasons), these private theatres are fortunately falling into neglect. "Think of the hoary dotard," says the hero of Griboiedoff's comedy, "who, for the sake of a ballet of his own invention, tore all the children on his estate from the arms of their despairing fathers and mothers. His loves and zephyrs had made him indifferent to the rest of the world. It is true that all Moscow flocked to admire his ballet, but that did not procure from his creditors a longer delay, and his loves and zephyrs were brought to the hammer. Such are the men whose grey hair we are called upon to reverence."

CHAPTER IX.

THE MOSCOW OPERA-HOUSE.

By a curious combination of circumstances, I find myself in possession of a number of facts connected with the Russian stage, and especially with the new Opera-house at Moscow, which have never been published out of Russia, and which, even there, are not very generally known. I was fortunate enough to be in Moscow when the new theatre was opened, and to receive—that is to say, to obtain—through the courtesy of the British Ambassador, an invitation to the "gala spectacle," on which occasion the house was filled with the most brilliant audience it is ever likely to contain. It must, indeed, have been a "gala spectacle" for Signor Cavos, the architect, who, to continue the list of my advantages, favoured me with every information that could be desired respecting the construction and dimensions of his theatrical masterpiece. Then a few months afterwards, at the beginning of the winter of 1856, the hundredth anniversary of the

establishment of Government theatres in Russia was celebrated. A piece called "1756 and 1856" (of which the subject is sufficiently explained by the title) was produced at the "Little Theatre," and one of the Moscow journals published an original history of the Russian stage. After that, happening to speak to some friends about the founder of the theatre in Moscow, I learned that they were related to him, or rather descended from him; and from the information they were kind enough to give me, added to that which I had already obtained from the newspaper, the play, and from other more familiar sources, I have been enabled to draw up an account of the introduction and progress of theatrical performances in Russia, which may, perhaps, be found interesting, and which, at all events, is novel and true.

The first theatrical representation in Russia of which there is any record, took place in the reign of Alexis Mikhailovitch (Peter the Great's father), in the house of his father-in-law, the Boyar Miloslavsky, who may be remembered as one of the leaders of the first insurrection of the Strelitzes. The Russians say that their first regular dramas were not produced until the reign of Feodor Alexeievitch (Peter the Great's half-brother and predecessor). They were written by the Tzar's tutor, a monk, and were called the "Prodigal Son," "King Nebuchadnezzar," the "Golden Calf," and the "Three Men in the Fiery Furnace." These were represented in the Pleasure Palace at Preobrajensky, a suburb of Moscow, and afterwards by the students of the academy attached to the monastery. The lay pupils were enjoined to learn these dramas during their playtime, as well as certain "moral comedies" which were written for them by the teachers. The pupils of the Novgorod monastery, and of the Laura of the Holy Trinity, near Moscow, received a similar recommendation.

The "moral comedies" appear, like the early productions of every stage, to have been deficient in morality, or, at all

events, to have been coarse even to grossness. The religious pieces ought to have been orthodox enough, written as they were by monks, or by "the learned Demetrius Tooptaloo," archbishop of Rostoff, who composed several Scripture histories in verse; among others, "The Sinner, an Allegory," "Esther and Ahasuerus," and "The Birth of Christ." Nevertheless, Staehlin (referred to by Archdeacon Coxe in his "Travels") relates an instance of profane ribaldry having been introduced into one of the scriptural pieces, "which," says the English author, "is too gross to be mentioned." Staehlin was present at some performances given by the students of surgery in the hospital at Moscow. The representation took place in the great hall, where a stage had been raised, and screens were used for the scenery. The subject was Tamerlane, and "nothing could be more grotesque and ridiculous." The same author had seen the Empress's grooms act in a still more wretched manner, either in the hay-loft of the imperial stables, or in an unfurnished house. Actors of this sort used also to perform every year for the amusement of the common people; they had no regular theatre, but were accustomed to play in different parts of the city. At dusk, a paper lantern was hung from the window, and two huntsmen's horns were blown to announce the performance. The entrance-money was from one to five *copeiks* (less than a halfpenny to twopence), and the spectators usually remained two hours to see "every species of nonsense and ribaldry."

Sophia, Peter the Great's sister, and for some time his guardian and representative, had a great liking for the drama, and extended her patronage to genius and learning of all kinds. At a period when the country possessed no dramatic literature, and when buffooneries and so-called moralities were the only theatrical representations known, this princess composed a tragedy herself, and acted in it. Karamzin mentions this fact, but he does not mention what has been stated elsewhere, that Sophia

translated Molière's *Médecin malgré lui* into Russian. However, it appears certain that the *Médecin malgré lui* was one of the first secular pieces played in Russia, and that it was produced at the house of one of the boyars in the year 1690. It has been recently asserted that the story on which the piece in question is founded, is of Russian origin; and M. Léon Godard, in his interesting volume of letters, entitled *St. Pétersbourg et Moscou*, gives what he seems to consider the original tale. Nadejda is the wife of a boyar, and is beaten by him regularly every Thursday and Sunday. Determined to be revenged, she goes to Boris Godounoff, at that time a sufferer from the gout, and informs him that her husband possesses the means of curing him at once, but that he believes the death of the Tzar would be beneficial to the country. The boyar is sent for, and receives a sound beating for his persistence in not divulging the supposed secret. The wife does not, as in Molière, recommend beating as a means of eliciting the secret; she knows that her husband will receive that punishment as a matter of course; and it may be said that many other of the details of the piece seem naturally to belong to Russia rather than to France. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that in all young nations the popular instrument of retribution is the stick; and surely, if we are to choose between the two, the hero and victim in the original tradition is more likely to have been a French woodcutter than a Russian nobleman. In the meanwhile, one thing is certain, that a piece taken professedly from the *Médecin malgré lui* was brought out at Moscow in 1690; and it appears to us that the Russians have since taken the story from the play, as the French author, in all probability, took the play from some old story. The writer of the article on the Russian stage in the Moscow journal does not attempt to claim a Russian origin for Molière's comedy, nor does he mention the existence of any Russian tale on the same subject.

Peter the Great, when, in the midst of so many other reforms, he undertook the reorganization of the Russian stage, looked naturally abroad for the means of effecting the change. An Hungarian actor happened to be at Moscow. Peter sent him to Dantzic to engage a German troop, who arrived, to the number of nine, the following year. Twelve children, the sons of priests, merchants, and citizens (that is to say,—traders not belonging to a guild), joined them in the capacity of pupils. Kunst, the director, also taught ship-building; but whether he was an actor who had turned ship-builder, or a ship-builder who had turned actor, does not appear. Probably Peter, unwilling to spend money on the ornamental alone, had told his Hungarian to find him a man who understood both arts. However that may have been, Kunst appears to have been thoroughly successful in each. His performances in the Soukhareff tower were honoured by the presence of Peter himself, and several officers and nobles allowed their children to join his troop.

A wooden theatre was now commenced in the Kitai Gorod (Chinese town), in the middle of the "Krasnoi Ploshchad," or Red Square, just outside the Kremlin. While the building was being erected, the performances took place in the residence of Lefort, of Finland (all the ship-building interest appears to have been engaged just then on behalf of the stage). Lefort is known to have been an able man. A writer, who was well acquainted with him, says that he was "of a good understanding," and adds that he was "very personable, engaging, and entertaining; a true Swiss for probity and bravery, but *chiefly for drinking*."

The performances at the wooden theatre must have finished early, for it is mentioned as an extraordinary fact, that on the night of representation the gates of the city were kept open *until* nine o'clock. It used also to be publicly announced that no money would be taken at the doors, "so as to encourage a taste for the drama."

Kunst, when not building ships, used to construct plays. After the battle of Pultava, he had to write a piece on the subject, and to introduce the Swedish generals under fictitious names. Of this task he appears to have acquitted himself very successfully. The piece was played during Peter's triumphal entry into Moscow, and was much applauded. At this time the nobles formed the chief part of the audience, and had their places assigned to them according to their rank. The entry was free. The female parts were played by men.

About this period operas and German pieces began to be performed at Moscow, and the first regular Russian theatre was opened at Yaroslaff, under the direction of a celebrated actor named Fedor Volkoff, who is also known as Yaroslavsky, from the town which gave him birth. Having at an early age given proofs of his ability, he was sent for his education to Moscow, where he studied the German language, music, and drawing. Circumstances obliged Volkoff to return to Yaroslaff, and to adopt the trade of his father-in-law, who was a manufacturer of sulphur and saltpetre; but having occasion, in 1748, to visit St. Petersburg, his natural inclination for the stage led him to attend the German theatre established there, and to form an acquaintance with some of the actors.

Returning a second time to Yaroslaff, Volkoff constructed a large stage in his father-in-law's house, painted the scenes himself, and, assisted by his four brothers, acted several times before a large assembly. Their first performances were the scriptural histories of our friend "Tooptaloe;" these were succeeded by the tragedies of Soumorokoff, the production of whose first work, *Koreff*, marks an important era in the history of the Russian stage. It was the first piece of genuine and original literary merit produced in Russia.

Sometimes the brothers Volkoff brought out pieces of their own, in which they satirized the people of Yaroslaff. In spite of the ridicule, the inhabitants flocked to the

theatre; but, as they paid nothing at the doors (who could expect them to pay for having their own follies and weaknesses pointed out?), the stern father-in-law found the speculation singularly unprofitable, and closed the establishment.

Then, in 1750, Volkoff constructed a theatre on his own plan, partly by subscription and partly at his own risk. After assisting in the preparation of the scenes and dresses, he procured an additional number of actors, instructed them himself, and, supported by the whole of his troop, appeared with great success before large audiences, who willingly paid for their admission.

In 1752 the Empress Elizabeth, having heard of the performances of the Yaroslaff troop, summoned them to St. Petersburg, where they represented several of the tragedies of Soumorokoff in the court theatre. This theatre had been erected for the fêtes in honour of the Empress's coronation, and the first pieces produced on its stage were a translation of Metastasio's *Clemenza di Tito*, and a ballet with this neat title, "The Joy of the People at the Appearance of the Star on the Russian Horizon, and at the Advent of the Golden Age." Although pleased with the performances of the Yaroslaff troop, the Empress does not appear to have thought them by any means perfect, for we find that she sent Volkoff's brothers to study for four years at the College of Cadets. The director, deprived of his companions, was for some time at a loss what to do; but at last he bethought himself of replacing his lost brothers by marionettes.

On August 30, 1756, Elizabeth issued an *oukaz* establishing a government theatre in St. Petersburg. The troop was composed of Volkoff and his four brothers, who had now completed their education in the "Cadetsky Corpus," some minor performers, and three actresses. A sum equivalent to 1,000*l.* of our money was set apart annually for the company, of which the directors received 200*l.*, together with the rank of lieu-

tenant (the present director of the Russian government theatres, M. Sabouroff, has the rank of general). During the same year, in Moscow, the University authorities invited the nobles to be present at a series of dramatic representations, under the management of the director of the University. The illustrious Soumorokoff wrote some of the pieces, and the director of the University the others. The students were the actors, and among them was the future comedy writer, Von Vesen, the precursor of Griboiedoff and Gogol. We are told that the Empress used to reward the meritorious performers with swords, and the best of all were taken away from the Moscow University, and incorporated with the St. Petersburg troop. The St. Petersburg company continued to flourish under the patronage of Catherine II.; Volkoff, and his brothers were ennobled, and received grants of land, and Soumorokoff, who had the highest admiration for Volkoff's talent, showed great ardour in supplying him with pieces. But the triumphs of this actor were short-lived. He appeared for the last time, in Moscow, in the tragedy of "Zelmira," and died soon afterwards (1763), in the thirty-fifth year of his age. Soumorokoff, true to the genius of the French tragic authors, lamented his friend in the classico-mythologic style :—"Melpomene, unite thy tears with mine! Lament and tear thy locks! My friend is dead. Adieu, my friend! The source of Hippocrene is frozen. * * * * Volkoff is separated from the Muses for ever. Tragedy has lost her buskin and her poignard. Melpomene, bedew his tomb with thy tears," &c.

In the year 1763, it was provided that a fourth part of the receipts of the Moscow actors should be given to the Foundling Hospital. In 1766 ballet performances were introduced by an Italian. The Moscow company had now regularly established itself in Count Vorontsoff's house, which was, in fact, the Moscow theatre, when, in 1780, while "Demetrius the Impostor"—a piece founded on events in the national history—was being

performed, the building caught fire, and was burnt to the ground.

The drama, then, was houseless in Moscow. But it was no longer destined to lodge with rich noblemen. It was at length to have a home of its own, and, strangely enough, it received its habitation from an Englishman. However, although comparatively but few Englishmen have mixed themselves up with the public life of Russia (and we hear of none entering the odious civil service, of which the Germans are so fond), many have signalized themselves in independent capacities, and also in the army and navy. Thus, General Patrick Gordon defeated the rebellious Strelitzes during Peter the Great's absence from Russia. Admirals Greig and Elphinstone destroyed the Turkish fleet in one of the few general actions ever fought by the Russian navy. One of Catherine the Great's most distinguished naval commanders was Captain Sutherland; and her physician, Matthew Guthrie, wrote a work on Russian antiquities, which is still the best authority on the subject. Finally, an Englishman named Medox founded the Moscow Theatre; and if his structure was not so magnificent as the one since erected on the same site by the Russian architect of the exterior, Tonn, and the Italian architect of the interior, Cavos, it was, nevertheless, a very fine building, and was actually commenced and finished in five months.

Mr. Medox was a man of mystery. He had travelled much, had seen many countries, and wore a scarlet cloak —a peculiarity which gained him the nickname of "the Cardinal." He came to Russia from India, but he had nothing to do with the Indies. From his passport, it appeared that he was of Oxford University, and that he was —not an architect or a manager, but a professor of mathematics. Catherine II. knew something of mathematics herself, and she chose Mr. Medox to instruct her son Paul in that science. It was probably during this period that the Englishman gained the Empress's favour; but, how-

ever that may have been, she certainly behaved with great liberality towards him throughout his Russian career.

When the mathematician resolved to build a theatre, he had, first of all, to solve a problem which has driven millions to despair, and which may be stated as follows: "Given a scheme; it is required to find the money necessary for carrying it out." But Mr. Medox, who had studied at Oxford, and travelled in India, and who walked about the streets in a red cloak, was not to be baffled. Not having sufficient capital of his own, he proceeded to the Government Loan Office, and borrowed the sum of 130,000 roubles. For this he must certainly have had the consent, if not the direct recommendation, of the Empress; but the writer in the Moscow journal states that the privilege of managing the theatre for ten years was obtained for him by Prince Vassili Mikhailovitch Dolgorouki Crimski (*i. e.* of the Crimea). The new theatre was opened in 1780, the very year in which the other one was burned down, and was called the Petrovski. It is a remarkable fact, that when Medox entered upon the management of it, he scarcely understood the Russian language. Probably the pieces played were translations; for we are told that he himself instructed all the actors, who were, for the most part, peasants belonging to an estate that he had purchased.

The Petrovsky is said to have been admirably adapted for spectacular pieces, and also for masquerades, which were frequented by the highest society. It occupied, as we have said, the ground on which the Opera-house now stands; but at that time the actors and actresses had their lodgings in the wings. It was a large and magnificent building, and each box, as at the present day, had a retiring-room attached to it. The assemblies were held in a large circular hall, furnished with mirrors, which, when lighted up, produced a very brilliant effect. There was also a splendid chandelier, with forty-two lustres;

and the price of admission to this attractive place was no more than a rouble. When the Petrovsky Theatre was first opened, an inaugurative piece was produced, at the suggestion of the Empress, under the title of "The Wanderers," in allusion, we presume, to the ever-changing abode of the Moscow players. We shall not attempt an analysis of the plot. Suffice it to say, that Apollo, Mercury, Thalia, &c., were the principal characters, and that the scenery included a representation of Parnassus, and a grand view of Moscow, with its new theatre.

We must mention that, before constructing the Petrovsky Theatre, Mr. Medox had undertaken the management of "a kind of Vauxhall," as Archdeacon Coxe calls it, "which," he adds, "I did not expect to find in this northern climate, and which our curiosity led us to visit." It is, in fact, the same "Vauxhall" that exists near Moscow at the present day in the gardens of the Hermitage. We are told that "the proprietor is an Englishman, whose name is Mattocks," and that "the encouragement he met with from the natives on this occasion had enabled him to engage in constructing, at a very considerable expense, a spacious theatre of brick;" and, finally, "that, as an indemnification, he had obtained from the Empress an exclusive patent for all plays and public masquerades during ten years from the time of its completion."

However, after two years of Mr. Medox's term of directorship had expired, a theatre was opened at the Foundling Hospital, under the direction of Baron Vonjura. Of this, also, Archdeacon Coxe can tell us something. He was present at a representation of *L'Honnête Criminel*, and of *Le Devin du Village*, both translated into Russian. All the decorations had been prepared by the foundlings; they had constructed the stage, painted the scenes, and made the dresses. "Not understanding the language," says this author, "I could be no judge whether they spoke with propriety;" but he adds, that

he was "surprised at the ease with which they trod the stage, and was pleased with the gracefulness of their action." He afterwards informs us that "there were some agreeable voices in the opera," and that "the orchestra was filled with a band by no means contemptible which consisted entirely of foundlings, except the first violin, who was their music-master." Owing to the illness of the principal performer the play did not, as usual, conclude with a ballet; but the visitors were informed that the foundlings danced with great taste and elegance.

Mr. Medox naturally could not approve of these foundling performances; he accordingly addressed the Empress on the subject, and the director of the Foundling Theatre had to close it. Nevertheless it was well known that the Empress favoured the theatrical representations at the Foundling Hospital, from a desire to diffuse a taste for such entertainments among her subjects, and to enrich the Russian stage with a constant supply of good performers. Accordingly, it was not long before an agreement was made between Medox and the director of the Foundling Hospital, by which the former was to educate a hundred foundlings of both sexes for the stage, their ordinary expenses to be paid, and their stage-dresses supplied, by the latter. The Foundling Theatre was also to be re-opened under Medox's direction; and out of the receipts at his other theatre, instead of paying a fourth to the Foundling Hospital, he was only to pay a tenth.

Having assumed the management of the two theatres, Mr. Medox commenced by doubling his French and German troops; but, after a short time, he found himself encumbered with debts; he was not able to pay a tenth part of what he owed, and remained indebted to the Government Loan Office to the amount of 100,000 roubles. Then the Foundling Theatre was again closed, and Medox again devoted all his energies to the manage-

ment of the Petrovsky, which depended now upon the performances of a single Russian troop.

Not content, however, with one dramatic establishment, the manager soon afterwards tried his fortune with a little summer theatre; but one speculation appears to have interfered with the other, and at last he found himself, as before, with very little money and a very large troop. This time he gave up theatrical management altogether.

In 1779 the actors wanted to take the theatre, and play on their own account; but the Government objected to their security, and refused to advance the money they required. Then an attempt was made to reinstate Medox in his former position: a special committee was formed, and a subscription opened for his benefit. But as much as 300,000 roubles was required to pay his debts and start him afresh. This amount it was impossible to obtain, and accordingly Medox's privilege was not renewed. The Empress gave him a pension of 3000 roubles, and he abandoned theatrical management, as he had previously abandoned mathematics.

In 1806, during Paul's reign, the Petrovsky was reopened under the name of "The Empress's Theatre;" but in the winter of the same year it was burnt down. In 1807 a theatrical school was founded; and, by order of the Government, a new wooden theatre was erected, which was opened on April 13, 1808, when "Glory to the Tzar Alexander," and other pieces celebrating the war, were performed. It will be remembered that the battle of Eylau was looked upon by the Russians as a victory; and really, if the general in command was not aware that he had been defeated, what could the people of Moscow be supposed to know about the matter?

In 1812 a wooden theatre, which had been erected temporarily, was the first prey of the fire.

In 1814 the actors re-assembled, and played in the

house of a merchant named Apraxin. The representations, which are said to have been very brilliant, took place under the direction of Prince Galitzin, the Governor-General, who received a subvention from the State. Ten years afterwards, Apraxin's house was pulled down, and the large theatre was rebuilt by an architect named Bové, on the foundations of the old Petrovsky. The "Imperial Theatre," as it was now called, was opened in 1824, on which occasion "The Triumph of the Muses," with music by Verstovsky (the composer of *Ascoldova Mogila*), was produced. Verstovsky is still attached to the Moscow Theatre in the capacity of musical director.

The theatre was again rebuilt in 1843, by Tonn, a man of high genius, but who seems to have little regard for the ancient and characteristic architecture of Moscow. His magnificent Italian palace (known as the New Palace) in the Kremlin does not harmonize in the least with the Russo-Byzantine cathedrals in its immediate vicinity; and its polished marble clashes terribly with the dentellated brick wall which surrounds the old fortress on all sides. When Solari of Milan, at the end of the fifteenth century, reconstructed the walls of the Kremlin (originally built as a defence against the Tartars in 1367), and Aristotle of Bologna, at about the same period, built the chief cathedrals contained in it, they both conformed to the style of architecture then employed in Russia—a modification of the Byzantine. It was reserved for a native architect to place an Italian edifice in the midst of a number of old Russian ones. Some such objections may also be made to Tonn's new Cathedral of the Saviour, which, however, is partly in the Byzantine style, and which, when finished, will certainly be one of the finest churches in Moscow. However, of the theatre I can only say that it is a magnificent building, which it would be an honour to any city to possess; and I am inclined to admire it even more than the palace and the

cathedral, because there are as fine palaces and finer cathedrals elsewhere, whereas the Moscow Opera-house appears to be quite without a rival.

Certainly the architect had this advantage to begin with—he had an admirable site; or rather he had plenty of room, for that is what it amounts to. In most cities, and especially in London, a theatrical architect has so little space for his edifice, that even if he did erect a beautiful building (an experiment which has seldom been tried), it would be impossible to get a complete view of it; the best thing he can do is to content himself with constructing an imposing façade. Even St. Petersburg, with "its desert places, which the inhabitants call vast squares" (to borrow a sarcasm of twenty years since), has no site for a theatre comparable to the one on which the Moscow Opera-house stands. In the northern capital, the best localities are occupied by the two great cathedrals, and a multitude of palaces. The top-heavy Alexander Theatre, so much over-praised, enjoys, it is true, a conspicuous position; but the Opera-house has now another dramatic establishment—the Tsirk, or Circus Theatre *—immediately facing it, and it is closely surrounded by shops and bureaux. The Moscow Opera-house is a detached building, forming one side of a large oblong *place*, or "square," from which there are four outlets, communicating with the principal quarters of the town. It is in a central situation, close to the walls of the Kremlin; it can be approached on all sides, and there is sufficient space all round it for several rows of carriages. Besides the grand entrance in front, looking on to the square, there are two side entrances, and one at the back for the actors; and as no money is taken at the doors, and only as many tickets as there are seats are issued, there is no crowding on going in, and very little on coming out. Personally, I only know the Moscow Theatre as restored by Signor Cavos; but I believe all

* Since burned to the ground.

the advantages I have hitherto mentioned as belonging to it were possessed equally by the old building.

It should have been stated that Tonn's theatre of 1843 opened with Glinka's "Life for the Tzar," an opera which has since attained great popularity in Russia.

One morning in the winter of 1853, during a rehearsal, the Moscow Theatre again caught fire, and, with the exception of the outer walls, was burnt to the ground. During the year 1854 there was no "Great Theatre;" but in the spring of 1855 the masons and bricklayers set vigorously to work, and the whole theatre, with all its decorations, was completed in a year and four months. It is true that the builders raised our Covent Garden from its ruins in less than half that time, and that the entire Winter Palace in St. Petersburg was erected in a twelvemonth; but to finish the Moscow Theatre, the most finished that exists, in a year and four months (including a winter of nearly six months, during which it is impossible for bricklayers to work), was a very creditable performance.

M. Cavos is not only an architect, he is also an "acoustician," if we may use the term: in other words, he understands, what does not appear to be understood in London, that to build a music-hall in which the music is either not heard at all, or only to great disadvantage, is far more absurd than to build one unpleasing to the eye, but, nevertheless, "good for sound," and that there is no necessity for doing either. M. Cavos ridicules the generally-received idea that it is impossible to know beforehand whether a building will or will not be "good for sound." He says that certain proportions must be observed, certain distances kept, and certain materials employed (the Moscow Theatre is lined throughout with wood), and that then there can be no doubt about the result. M. Cavos was kind enough to accompany me all over the theatre, from the Emperor's apartments to the upper boxes, and to give me a number of

interesting particulars respecting the construction of the *salle*, and the means taken to ensure "sonority." "It is constructed like a musical instrument," he said; and, apparently, he would have been as much astonished to find the Moscow Theatre not thoroughly adapted for operatic performances as Broadwood or Erard might be at discovering that some pianoforte-case, built in accordance with known rules, failed to answer the purpose for which it was intended.

It must be remembered that the Moscow Opera was not M. Cavos' first experiment—if experiment be the word, which we doubt. He had already been engaged specially, in his capacity of "acoustician," to remedy some fault in the construction of the St. Petersburg Opera-house, which caused the singers to be heard to great disadvantage, and which had always existed. This theatre was first erected in Catherine's reign; it was reconstructed, and, having been burned down, reconstructed again by Alexander I. At last the Emperor Nicholas called in M. Cavos, who had been mentioned as the man of the situation. M. Cavos pulled down the interior, and rebuilt it; when it was found that not only was the theatre admirable for sonority, but that the stage was wider, and the *salle* more spacious, and altogether handsomer than before.

At Moscow, then, M. Cavos had, to a great extent, to do what he had already done at St. Petersburg, only that, at the Moscow Theatre, the space was greater and the reconstruction more thorough. There, as at the St. Petersburg Theatre, the acoustic problem has been solved most satisfactorily. Not the slightest sound is lost, there is not the least tendency to an echo, and you can hear equally well in all parts of the house. It was less difficult for me to judge of this, from the fact that, in the autumn of 1856, numerous vocalists were engaged in Moscow who had been in the habit of appearing by turns at the Operas of London, Paris, and St. Petersburg, and I had often

heard the principal members of the troop sing in at least three of the English and French theatres. The contralto, Madame Lablache (*née* de Méric), had certainly much improved since her appearance and disappearance at the Royal Italian Opera,—owing, perhaps, to the effect of the Russian winters, during which people take care never to catch cold. But there are some singers who are not expected to improve, and of whom all we hope is that they will remain for ever as they are. There was poor Madame Bosio, for instance. It was scarcely a month since I had heard her at the Lyceum, imperfectly, it is true; but at Moscow, in a theatre three times the size, you could hear her softest note. You could absolutely hear Calzolari,—a great test; for even at Her Majesty's Theatre, so excellently constructed for sound, it used sometimes to be supposed that he had no voice. As for Lablache, there could, of course, never have been much trouble about catching the tones of *his* voice—magnificent to the last!

Let me now give the dimensions of the Moscow Theatre (the figures were furnished by M. Cavos himself), and compare them with those of the two largest Opera-houses of Italy and of our new Covent Garden Theatre :—

	English feet.
Diameter of Ceiling :—La Scala (Milan) . .	70
„ „ San Carlo (Naples) .	73
„ „ Royal Italian Opera .	65
„ „ Moscow Theatre . .	98
Opening of Proscenium :—La Scala	51
„ „ San Carlo	58
„ „ Royal Italian Opera .	50
„ „ Moscow	70

At the Moscow Theatre the breadth of the stage is 126 feet: the depth, 112 feet; and the principal staircase (there are five altogether) is 126 feet long. At Covent Garden the breadth of the stage is 88 feet 6 inches; the depth, 90 feet.

There are five rows of boxes at the Moscow Opera-house, besides an amphitheatre, and a gallery, or "*paradis*," which occupies the whole of the top tier. There are sixteen boxes on the pit tier, thirty on the grand tier, or *bel étage*, and twenty on each of the amphitheatre tiers. Every box in the theatre has a room, or "cabinet," attached to it; those on the *bel étage* have "cabinets" which are so many little drawing-rooms, furnished with sofas, mirrors, and damask hangings. The usual allowance of chairs for each box is six; but there is plenty of room for ten or twelve persons, or even more, according to our Western notions of theatrical comfort. Each person taking a box is as much the proprietor of it for the evening as if it were his ordinary residence. It holds as many as you like to put into it; and, of course, for this very reason, it is a proof of very bad taste to fill it. In Russian novels and comedies it is a stock joke to represent merchants going to the theatre in family parties of twelve; and I have actually seen a party of more than twelve in one box, which, as might be expected, was one of the cheapest in the house. It was indeed not dear: thirteen persons paying a pound between them to see *La Gitana*, with an admirable *corps de ballet*, our old friend Perrot, and Miss Lébédéva,—a native young lady who will be heard of one of these days at the Académie Royale, and at Her Majesty's Theatre. On that occasion, Miss Lébédéva ("Gospajá" Lébédéva is what she ought to be called) was summoned seventeen times before the curtain. She is one of the most passionate and expressive pantomimists imaginable, and also one of the most graceful dancers.

The Emperor has two boxes at the Moscow Theatre: one for gala nights, in the middle of the *bel étage*, very magnificent, and reaching to the tier above; the other a comparatively quiet affair, on the right of the stage, but, at the same time, the most richly decorated proscenium-box ever seen. Adjoining the latter is a lofty and splen-

didly furnished drawing-room, leading to a retiring-room. These apartments, to which there is a special staircase and entrance, are always prepared for the Emperor when he is in Moscow. Opposite the ordinary imperial box is one set apart for the ministers of state.

For the general public there are, on the ground-floor, about five hundred stalls. Each stall is a separate arm-chair, in which you can enjoy as much space as you would desire in any drawing-room. There is a passage down the middle of the "stalls,"—as in the pit of Her Majesty's Theatre, only wider,—and there is a passage all round them; so that at any period of the evening you can walk quietly to or from your place without incommoding either yourself or your neighbour.

The price of stalls is regulated by their proximity to the stage, and also by the attractiveness of the performances. When the Italians were playing, the chairs in the front rows let for six roubles (about a pound), the back rows for five and four roubles. A bureau for the sale of tickets, attached to the theatre, is open all day, and during the performances, but no money is taken at the doors; nor on entering the theatre are you required to give up your ticket, or even, as a rule, to show it. Each ticket entitles the holder to a seat, and in order that there may be abundance of room for some two thousand persons, no such thing as "standing room" is recognized. If you do not know the way to your place, there are plenty of attendants to point it out to you; and it is for the place you pay, not for the mere admission. The Russians take their servants with them to the theatre, and in the winter the wide corridors on each tier are full of them. They mount guard at the back of the boxes, perhaps criticizing the music or, more probably by far, the audience, and waiting in readiness to call the carriage at the first nod, and to untie the sheet in which are enclosed the furs and galoshes that their masters and mistresses will put on before venturing from the

vestibule down the steps of the portico to their covered sledge.

It may be mentioned that behind the stalls there are rows of seats with partitions (like the stalls at Her Majesty's Theatre). They let for about half the price of the stalls—two or three roubles during the performances of the Italians, and three-quarters of a rouble afterwards—and correspond to our pit.

The general appearance of the interior is brilliant and imposing. A great deal of gold is employed in the ornamentation, but it is distributed with taste. The panels of the boxes are white, ribbed with a delicate light blue, and are adorned with a gold scroll-work; the borders being pure white. The two proscenium-boxes seem built of gold; but they are very lofty, and have a light and elegant appearance, in spite of the richness of the decoration. All the hangings are of crimson damask silk.

But the most remarkable thing about the interior of this theatre has yet to be mentioned.

In the construction of boxes the architect has had the happy idea of combining the Italian with the French style. The retiring-rooms represent the Italian boxes, the boxes themselves the French ones. The crimson hangings adorn and partly conceal the former, which are thus made to resemble the private boxes at an Italian Opera-house; while the latter unite and form one large balcony, like the French *balcon*, or the dress circle of an English theatre. During the performance, the inhabitants of the boxes come forward, and the ladies' toilettes are seen to advantage, as in the French theatres; during the *entr'acte*, they retire to their miniature drawing-rooms, or "*loges à l'Italienne*," as M. Cavos calls them, and receive their friends in the Italian style.

It is like going out of your real domestic drawing-room into the balcony to see some show, and then returning inside when the show is at an end.

The drop-scene, an admirable painting by Duzi, a Venetian, the colouring of which harmonizes perfectly with the decorations of the theatre, represents the triumphal entry of Prince Pojarsky and Minin, the cattle-dealer of Nijni Novgorod, into the Kremlin, after the liberation of Moscow from the Poles, in 1612. Minin and Pojarsky are seen on horseback, approaching the Holy Gate, and surrounded by groups of enthusiastic peasants and citizens. The women are dressed in *kakoshniks* and *sarafans*, like the Russian wet-nurses in the present day, and the men in caftans and girdles, the unchanged and, apparently, unchangeable costume of the Russian peasant. Prince Pojarsky, too, wears the Oriental costume habitual to the boyars until the time of Peter. The picture is very dramatic, and it has the advantage of recalling one of the most popular eras in Russian history.

One of the most attractive parts of the Moscow Theatre, on the gala night in honour of the coronation, was the *foyer*. Not that the cakes, sweetmeats, ices, punch, and tea (tea is really a luxury when it is Russian tea) had any undue charms for the guests, though it certainly appeared an excellent idea to invite people to a brilliant and artistic entertainment, and supply them with agreeable refreshments between the acts: and we may add that most of the company gave practical evidence that they were of that way of thinking, as soon as the Emperor and Empress withdrew from the front of their box. It was the decoration of the *foyer*, and especially that of the staircase, with its evergreens and hothouse plants, that was so much admired. The vestibules, staircases, and corridors of the theatre are in proportion to the *salle;* and the *foyer*, which is at least as broad as that of the Académie Royale (probably broader, for all the approaches are certainly on a much larger scale), extends in a semicircle all round the *bel étage*, from one proscenium-box to the other. In fact, it is not one, but five *foyers*,

each of which is a magnificent room. This arrangement is like that of the Moscow houses, in which the sitting and reception rooms are all built *en suite*.

The lighting of the theatre is effected by means of one enormous central chandelier, which burns oil, and ninety candelabra, each of which bears seven wax tapers. The candelabra are equally distributed along the five rows of boxes; but, on ordinary occasions, only those of the *bel étage* are made use of. When, however, the Emperor appears in state, the whole theatre is lighted up, and the brilliant effect of the illumination is heightened by the number of diamonds displayed by the ladies of the Court. No one is admitted except by invitation, and all the men have to appear in uniform. At the "Gala Theatre," at which I was present, there were three or four exceptions to the latter rule, and the wearers of black coats looked as conspicuous as the wearers of red ones would in the pit of the opera in London. These fêtes are, however, by no means fêtes for the singers, who are scarcely listened to, and not applauded at all. It is not etiquette to testify any approbation, unless the chief of the assembly first gives the signal, and he seldom, if ever, thinks fit to do so. The opera selected for the Coronation Festival was Donizetti's *Elisir d'Amore;* but in spite of the laughter-moving quack doctor, and the enchanting village-girl, neither mirth nor any kind of delight was exhibited by the audience. It could be seen that the veteran basso had sworn to provoke the hilarity of the majestic senators who occupied the front rows, but he failed; there was not so much as a snigger on their august countenances, and the generals and diplomatists seemed equally unmoved. For the first time the pleasantries of the charlatan passed unheeded, while the exquisite voice of the village-girl was as of one singing in the wilderness. When there is a strong desire to clap the hands, and it is impossible to gratify it, the sensation is

really very painful; it is, in fact, the counterpart of the feeling experienced when there exists a strong wish to express hatred, and a stern necessity for remaining silent. Alexander II. is a liberal and enlightened sovereign, and by far the best emperor Russia has ever had; but it was a little too despotic not to give permission to his guests at the Moscow Opera-house to applaud the duet between Norina and Dulcamara, when Norina was Madame Bosio, and Dulcamara Lablache.*

CHAPTER X.

OPERATIC AND OTHER MUSIC.

Russia may be expected to produce some good operas. The people are passionately fond of music, and the government encourages it. The Russians appreciate good singing, and have produced some excellent vocalists; while their national music, for character and true melody, is, on the whole, superior to that of any nation in Europe. Nor is it of late years only that foreign musicians have been encouraged in Russia. The music of the Russian Church has been praised by Paesiello, who lived for some years in St. Petersburg. Boieldieu, who wrote several operas for the Russian stage (during the reign of Catherine), has also expressed his admiration of the Russian Church music, and especially of Bortniansky's contributions to it. Clementi, the pianist, is another of those eminent musicians who have always been welcomed in Russia. He was accompanied there by his pupil, John Field, who, when he was not playing

* Written in 1858. Dulcamara has long ceased to sing, and now poor Norina is no more.

the piano, was always drinking champagne, and who died of the latter in Moscow.

Of the modern Russian composers, we can only say that they are very numerous, that they write a great deal more vocal than instrumental music, and that they have not produced many operas. Their songs are certainly very beautiful, and the best of them have a decided national character. Several Russian airs have been appropriated by German composers; for instance, the "Red Sarafan," and the *Troika*, called in German *Die Blaue Augen* (the former of these melodies, by the way, is the first of the "Deux airs Russes," played so admirably by Wieniawski). Count Vielgorski's "Buivala," which, though an original melody, has all the national characteristics, has been made the subject of a *fantasia* by Vieuxtemps. Every one knows the magnificent national hymn by Lvoff, who has also written numbers of more familiar strains, and who has even supplied the gipsy companies of Moscow with some of their most popular airs. Varlamoff, one of the most graceful romance writers of the day, has also composed or arranged music for the gipsies, and one of their favourite melodies, of which the burden is well known in England, and which is also introduced in the ballet music of the Spanish dancers, is signed by Glinka, who, however, can only have harmonized it, for the tune belongs certainly to the gipsies themselves. Various other Russian composers have written for the gipsy troops; and it appears to us that the modern popular music of Russia may be divided into melodies in the style of the old national airs, and into melodies founded on, or imitated from, the traditional airs of the gipsies, such as "The Nightingale,"* "He loves me no more," and, above all, "The Refusal"—a dialogue song, in which a young man makes all sorts of desperate promises and professions of love to a young girl, who laughs at him and rejects him, because

* See Appendix.

in her character of gipsy she values nothing so much as her own liberty. Both styles appear quaint to foreign ears; but the former is distinguished by great simplicity and sadness, the latter by wildness and passion, and by a certain Oriental character. Naturally, in some of the songs of the present day, there is a union of the two styles; and, as in all European countries, a certain number of airs are published which are imitated, more or less, from the Italian. But in spite of the influence of the Italian Opera, and of the numerous Italian composers who have from time to time visited the country and written for its stage; in spite, too, of the number of German musical professors who have settled in St. Petersburg and Moscow, the Russians have certainly a national school of music, as can be shown not only from their songs, but from the operas of Glinka and Verstovsky. In reference to this subject an excellent critic in the "Musical World," after calling attention to the singular beauty of the Russian national melodies, says:—

"Far more than the hundreds of thousands of roubles that have been spent, and are yearly spent, upon *virtuosi* of every description—singers, pianists, violinists, harpists, flautists, and the rest, and upon such composers, too, as munificent engagements have tempted to visit the land of the Czars — Paesiello, Cimarosa, Boïeldieu, Balfe, and others,—far more than mints of money, mines of jewels, and courts full of compliments, which bespeak the cultivated taste of a single class, how large soever, or the desire to be believed to possess this taste and refinement whereof it is the token,—far more than all these do such eminently characteristic and unequivocally beautiful tunes as the two introduced in Rossini's *Barbiere*—the two upon which Thalberg and Ferdinand David constructed fantasias for their respective instruments—the one incorporated by Cramer in a pianoforte sonata, and the Imperial hymn, testify to the natural taste of the country, since they are known, and sung, and loved by

the entire people." He adds, that "Russia possesses at least one genuine artist endowed with strong poetic feeling, a fertile power of invention, a marked originality of thought, and sufficient command of technical resources to enable him to give free expression to his ideas.

"Such," says this writer, "is M. J. Glinka, seventeen of whose songs with pianoforte accompaniment, and four of whose orchestral compositions in full score, are now before us. The summary we have given of the qualities that entitle Glinka to consideration should raise expectations of extraordinary merit in his works, and such expectations would be fully realized by the music upon which we are about to comment. While it presents nothing exclusively of Russia, it is all essential to Glinka. The collection of songs presents examples of expression varying from grace and gaiety to pathos. Belonging to the last category is an air from the fairy opera 'Rouslan and Loudmila,' of a truly passionate character, embodying the wild fervour of a Persian love; and another from the opera of 'Ivan Soussanin,' the scene of which lies in the native country of the composer—the song of an orphan, full of plaintive tenderness. These two pieces establish one further fact with relation to music in Russia, which is of signal importance—namely, that the country possesses an opera in its own language. Brief as they are they comprehend a deep purport, and it proves no less the intelligence of a public than the power of a composer, and the efficiency of performers, that music of this character should have been written for and produced upon the stage. In the same style as these two songs is a setting of the *Spinnelied*, from Göthe's *Faust*, a complete original conception of the poem, differing wholly from Schubert's extremely beautiful and universally known song, and equally unlike Mr. Macfarren's setting of the text, but a worthy illustration of the character of Gretchen. 'The Lark' is another specimen of a plaintive character, far simpler in its expression, but none the less true to the

poetical thought it embodies. A complete contrast in colouring to all of these is the cavatina, *A peine un instant*, the melody of which is fluent throughout, but in the last movement rises to real beauty. One word of commendation must suffice for several others, in which grace is the chief element and spontaneity the principal charm."

Glinka is known in Russia chiefly by his operatic productions, though he has written songs, quartets, and vocal and instrumental music of all kinds. His principal work for the stage is *Jisn za Tsarya* (Life for the Czar), which was first produced at the Moscow Opera in the year 1843. The plot of the piece, which is written by Count Rosen, turns upon the devotion of a peasant named Ivan Soussanin, who sacrificed his life to the safety of the Czar Michael. The chief of a band of Polish invaders who were in pursuit of Michael, the first of the Romanoffs, happened to fall in with this Soussanin. They interrogated him as to the Czar's place of concealment, and he offered to reveal it to them if they would accompany him. The proposition having been eagerly accepted, the loyal peasant led them to a wood from which it was impossible to find an issue, and then boldly declared to them that to save the life of the Czar he had determined to sacrifice his own. It was accordingly sacrificed; and in commemoration of his devotion the inhabitants of the village in which he lived are to this day exempted from the payment of certain taxes, while Ivan Soussanin himself has not only had a monument erected to him in his birthplace, but has also had the honour of being made the hero of a popular three-act opera. We believe *Jisn za Tsarya* is not often represented in the present day; at all events, it was not given while we were living in Moscow, nor afterwards, when we were in St. Petersburg; nor did we ever hear any detached pieces from it executed in accordance with the composer's intentions. Another operatic composer, Ver-

stovsky, the director of the Moscow Opera, is the author of some ballet music, of a great many songs (several of which are written for the gipsies), and of the music of two serious dramatic works, *Askoldova Mogila* ("The Tomb of Askold") and *Gramoboi*.

Askoldova Mogila is not, and cannot be, esteemed by the Russians in a scientific point of view. The overture is miserably poor; there are no concerted pieces of any importance, nor is there even an attempt in either of the acts at a well-constructed finale. By a musician, then, *Askoldova Mogila* would at once be set aside, that is to say, if judged only by the merits of its composer; but, at the same time, much of the music is interesting to a foreigner, because it is really national, instead of being imitated from the Italian. As the composers for the gipsy troops write music in the gipsy style, so Verstovsky, in treating a national subject, has given a national colouring to his melodies, even if he has not in a direct manner laid old Russian airs under contribution, which he sometimes appears to have done. There is a tune in polacca measure for the hero, which is quite in the style of those sung by the boatmen on the Volga (it must be remembered that "polacca" or "polonaise" is a misnomer, as that particular form of melody, like the mazourka, is in special favour with all the Slavonian nations), and the *prima donna* has an air (with chorus) which is also strikingly national. A large proportion of the melodies in this opera are in a minor key, as are by far the greater part of the old national airs; and the opera also abounds in airs with choral refrains or responses, which is another characteristic of the Russian popular music, whether executed by the peasants, the gipsies, or the Cossack companies. *Askoldova Mogila*, then, is essentially a popular work; and we can understand that the *habitués* of the Italian Opera, and of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Con-

certs, have no great opinion of it, though we repeat that it is full of interest for a foreigner. The piece, moreover, is entertaining as a spectacle; and the scenery, dresses, and decorations, when we saw it at the Moscow Opera, were worthy of any theatre in Europe. In fact, everything that a magnificent stage, intelligent superintendence, and a liberal expenditure could do for the work, had been done; but neither General Guédeonoff, nor General Sabouroff, nor all the directors in Russia together, can make the vocalists of the national theatres sing beautifully, if they have not beautiful voices. The only thorough artist who appeared was a high barytone (with a voice like Mr. Balfe's or M. Chollet's), who represented the hero, and who acted and sang with perfect taste. Unfortunately we forget his name; but he will never be heard out of Russia, for he is fast losing his voice; and it is only on stages where a singer is already known that such a remarkable deficiency can be tolerated, in consideration of high artistic intentions, and the impression left by the vocalist's former triumphs. There was a tenor, too, at the Moscow Opera who used to be much applauded; but he was a most unsatisfactory singer. We have heard Russians gravely discuss whether he ought to be hissed or called before the curtain at the end of a scene; one said that he ought to be hissed, because he had sung so badly, another that he ought to be applauded, by way of encouraging him to sing better another time.

We cannot take leave of *Askoldova Mogila* without calling attention to a strange account given of it by Baron Haxthausen, in his valuable work on Russia. This learned economist has the eccentricity to state that it reminded him of *La Sonnambula* and *Der Freyschütz!* We should have thought that if it recalled one of those operas, it could not very well have suggested the other, as there is no resemblance

between the two. Nor can we understand how the music of Verstovsky could remind any one either of Bellini or of Weber. Verstovsky's last opera of *Gramoboi* would doubtless appear to Baron Haxthausen a veritable *Der Freyschütz*, for it was founded on a legend (which forms the subject of one of Joukoffsky's poems), and involves the sale of a soul to the Evil One. The action, as in *Askoldova Mogila*, takes place at Kieff, and Askold and Dir, the sons of Rurik the Norman, again appear. The piece, which was produced in Moscow in 1857, had no success as an opera; but it was magnificently put upon the stage, and attracted for some time as a spectacle. The ordinary performances at the Moscow Opera, in 1856 and 1857, consisted of translations from Italian and other operas, such as the *Sonnambula*, *Lucrezia*, *Lucia*, *Trovatore*, *Traviata*, and *Martha* (which, by the way, is the work of a Russian, though written to a German *libretto*); and of grand ballets, admirably produced under the direction of Perrot, such as the *Gitana*, *Giselle*, *Esmeralda*, &c.

One of the most remarkable of contemporary Russian composers is the already mentioned Lvoff, who, besides a number of airs, fantasias, duets, and a concerto for the violin, a military chorus with an accompaniment of artillery* (!), six psalms, and forty-two detached pieces of church music, has arranged in four parts the ancient chaunts of the Orthodox Church, without sacrificing either the character of the music or the correct pronunciation of the words; moreover, without repetitions, and in the exact order of the service. This work forms twelve volumes, and occupied the author ten years. In order that the reader may understand the difficulties M. Lvoff had to contend with, we will here give a short sketch of the history of sacred music in Russia, a subject which

* See page 234.

has been treated very fully in a pamphlet by Count Dmitri Tolstoi.

"The most ancient musical document known in Russia was recently discovered in the library of the Troitza Monastery, near Moscow. It is described as a "Canticle" composed in honour of Prince Boris and Prince Gleb, who were canonized in the eleventh century. The canticle, however, has been written or transcribed in a style belonging to the twelfth century. It is maintained that it must have been composed by a Russian, inasmuch as the princes celebrated in it were not known out of the country; and of its antiquity there can be no doubt. But as in the tenth century Michael, the first metropolitan of Russia, brought with him from Constantinople a certain number of singers (said to have been Slavonians), and as, seventy years afterwards, other vocalists from the same city came to Russia for the express purpose of teaching the church-choristers the rules of part singing, it is impossible to say whether the canticle of the Troitza Monastery is due to the Byzantine professors or their Russian pupils: if it dates from the eleventh century, it, in all probability, belongs to the former; if from the twelfth, to the latter. In the course of time the Russian church music lost much of its original Græco-Bulgarian character, and the airs were varied according to the taste of the different provinces; Kiev, Novgorod, Souzdal, &c., having each distinctive chaunts, which were named after the cities in which they were habitually heard. Every large town had its own composers, or "harmonists," as they were called; and the diversity in the church music was so great that in the seventeenth century serious doubts were entertained as to its Byzantine origin. It was observed at the same time that the true object of sacred music had been lost sight of, for the correct utterance of the words was sacrificed altogether to the melody. Two schools then appeared, of which one

continued to cultivate music at the expense of the words, while the other aimed above all at an intelligible pronunciation of the prayers, to obtain which it was necessary to alter the melodies. The former appears to have been most successful, and in 1651 it had become so much the custom to alter and disfigure the words for the sake of the music, that a monk felt called upon to write a work on the subject, which attracted the attention of Alexis Mikhailovitch, Peter the Great's father. The Czar formed a commission to examine into the question, and establish uniform rules for the church music of Russia; and the patriarch of Constantinople sent a body of singers to Moscow, in order to re-establish the old Greek chaunt, but without effect. At length, in 1667, a council of bishops decided that it was absolutely necessary to alter the music so as to suit the words of the prayers, but there appears to have been no one in Russia capable of carrying out the desired change.

Some years afterwards a native composer published a grammar of singing, and in the beginning of the eighteenth century several musical works appeared, of which the notation was based on the Italian method: the principal difference arising from the fact, that in the old Russian church music there is no uniformity of measure or rhythm. The Italian religious music is written to verses, but the church service of Russia is in prose: hence the difficulty of adapting to the latter melodies composed in the Italian style; hence the two schools in ancient Russia and the apparently inevitable sacrifice of words to music, or music to words. Bortniansky, the most celebrated of the Russian composers of church music, on his return from Italy (where he composed operas, symphonies, sonatas, and pieces of all kinds), was appointed chorus-master to the Imperial chapel, of which he afterwards became director. He then devoted himself altogether to sacred compositions. He wrote music in four and eight parts to forty-five psalms, a mass in three parts, and a

great number of detached pieces. (We must here remind the reader that Russian ecclesiastical music is written for voices alone, the introduction of instrumental music in sacred edifices being strictly forbidden by the Greek Church.)* Bortniansky felt the necessity of re-arranging the ancient ecclesiastical chaunts, but had not time to execute the task himself. This, as we have already said, was at last accomplished by Alexis Lvoff, or "General" Lvoff, as his official rank entitles him to be called. This distinguished composer displayed great musical capacity at a very early age, and at eighteen was one of the best violinists of his time. The journals of Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Dresden, and Leipzig, have recorded his success as an executant, but, with the exception of the national hymn, his compositions are scarcely known out of Russia. His works are very numerous. In addition to the detached pieces of which we have already spoken, and the re-arrangement of the Church service, he has composed four operas and a Stabat Mater, with Latin and Russian words, and has arranged Pergolese's *Stabat* for a full orchestra and chorus.

All the works of Bortniansky and Lvoff are admirably executed by the Imperial choir, which numbers one hundred and ten of the finest voices imaginable, the basses and tenors being especially remarkable. The most celebrated choirs at Moscow are those of Philaret, the metropolitan, and of Prince Galitzin, who has built one of the most beautiful chapels in the city. At the monastery of the Don, a few versts from Moscow, there is also an admirable choir, but composed only of men. In addition

* Some years since it was proposed by the Emperor Nicholas to introduce an organ into the Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin. But the metropolitan, Philaret, the most distinguished and learned prelate that the Russian Church possesses, and, on all important points, a very liberal man, protested strongly and effectually against such an innovation. It is said that he threatened to resign his functions if the Emperor persisted in carrying out his "unorthodox" project.

to the churches, each regiment has its choir, as well as the charitable and educational establishments; indeed, it would be difficult to hear choral music more perfectly executed than at the Foundling Hospital of Moscow.

Some of the choirs of the rich Russian nobles who happen to have a taste for music, are second only to the Imperial choir directed by M. Lvoff. One of the most celebrated is that of Prince George Galitzin, the son of Prince Nicholas, to whom Beethoven dedicated some of his latest compositions. Prince Galitzin's choir, which gave several performances in Moscow at the time of the coronation, comes from Tamboff, and must not be confounded with the choir of the Galitzin chapel already mentioned. The Tamboff singers, ninety in number, have been selected from among the peasants of the prince's estate, and from careful tuition and constant practice have attained the utmost precision of execution. Prince George Galitzin taught them himself, and is said to have spent fifteen years in bringing the choir to its present perfection.

CHAPTER XI.

MOSCOW "THE HOLY."

"How beautiful, how magnificent," says Sagoskin, "is our Kremlin on a calm summer's night, when the redness of evening is dying away in the west, and the night-beauty, the full moon, floats out from beneath the clouds and spreads her mild light over the sky and the whole world! If you wish to spend a few really happy moments, if you wish to feel that inexpressible tranquillity of the soul which is higher than all earthly delights, go on a

moonlight summer's night to admire our Kremlin. Take your seat on one of the benches of the terrace, on the path which extends along the very edge of the slope; forget for some time the noisy world and all its follies, all your earthly cares and occupations, and give, if only for once, permission to your harassed and weary soul to breathe freely. Late in the evening you will not meet any one in the Kremlin; at eleven o'clock at night you will hear only the rare calls and the measured steps of the watchmen. Beneath your feet there will be a rumbling of equipages, varied by the shouts of the *isvoschiks* and the conversation of the promenaders on the banks of the Moskva. From the other side of the river come the merry songs of the workmen, and the dull confused talk of the Transmoskovians, whispering to you as it were of the pleasures and occupations of this earthly life. But all this is far from you; you are above it all. A few clouds have covered the bright moon, and the other side of the river is under a deep shade; the bright waves of the Moskva are dimmed, and the houses are shrouded in gloom. But here, on the heights of the Kremlin, all is light, and the summits of the churches glitter as before, and the gilt cross of Ivan Veliki burns like a star in the heavens. Look around; see in what harmony and magnificence rise before you all those ancient cathedrals, in which sleep the imperishable bodies of the saints of Moscow. Oh, how solemn is the silence, how sacred the feeling inspired by the scene! Here the gorgeous palaces of the Russian Czars, and there, at two steps from them, their simple burial-place! How all this carries you away from the world, extinguishes your passions, and humbles your heart, filling it with a feeling of inexpressible tranquillity and peace! Below, all is movement and anxiety; people are busy about their affairs, or helping one another to kill time: but here all is quiet, all is tranquil, and yet all is life—but it is life of another kind. Those high walls, those ancient towers and imperial palaces, are not

without speech: they speak to you of the past; in the soul of your memory rise thoughts of ages long since gone. Here everything appeals to your recollection, reminding you of both the misfortunes and the glories of your forefathers, their sufferings, their perturbations, and their firm belief in Providence, which so quickly and so wonderfully caused the greatness of Russia, and which guards her as the chosen instrument for carrying out its inscrutable designs. Here you are surrounded by the holiness of Russia, and commune with it as you think of your heavenly home. Your soul throws off its clay and its thoughts of earth; thoughts of the eternal give it wings, and it flies to regions where we shall no longer be divided into generations and nations, where there will be neither ages nor time, weeping nor pain. . . . Go to the Kremlin rather late in the evening, and if you are not altogether unaccustomed to hold communion with yourself, if you can live for a few moments without others, then you will certainly thank me for my advice. At least you will not be sorry if you attend to me and remain a little while in the Kremlin; for by moonlight it is so magnificent that you ought absolutely to do so, if only for the love of the beautiful."

"It is delightful," says Mouravieff, the Eastern traveller, and author of the "History of the Russian Church," "to stand on the heights of the Kremlin during the hour of vespers, when to the call of the golden-headed giant (Ivan Veliki) suddenly respond from all sides the voices of his numberless children, and the sound reverberates through the startled air—the many silver-voiced sound, formed not out of the tolling alone, but out of thoughts, feelings, and words which fall not to the earth. The language of the heavens is floating through the sky, and encompassing the city with its glorious hymn; it is the holy symbol of the host of angels, the watchmen of our Russian land, ever hovering over our heaven-watched tower, to chase away the princes of darkness. In the

mean time, under the canopy of a benign sky calmly rests the earth, as if in its mother's lap, and bright is the evening visage of the white-walled Moscow, with her blue waters and green gardens. It is the last hour of expiring day, which seems to part from her with regret, decorating her like a bride with fantastic flowers wherever it can delay one of its tardy rays; now burning like gold over a crowd of cupolas and crosses, now like maiden's blushes on the walls of the churches; now bringing out the white phantoms of the lofty towers from the mass of buildings which surround them. These phantoms, rising as it were from the darkness of past ages, speak of bygone glory; huge records of our empire are those stone columns, erected by our forefathers as memorials of great deeds, so that at the sight of them they might fortify themselves by prayer for new achievements."

Mouravieff then names the edifices which are particularly remarkable for their religious and patriotic associations. Directly opposite the Kremlin is the church where, for a long time, lay the remains of Prince Michael and the boyar Fedor, who sealed their belief in Christ with their blood in the presence of the savage Batu-Khan. Beyond it are the ancient towers of the Simeonoff monastery, marking the place where a victory was gained over the Tartars; and the church of St. Sergius, who by his prayers moved the warriors of the Don to overcome Mamai. To the left rises by itself the tall belfry of the "Newly Saved," and with it the recollection of another decisive triumph over the Mongols, when the last khan was put to flight, and the fall took place of the golden tax,* which for two centuries had oppressed Russia; coupled with this is the memory of the great Ivan,† who first collected the Russians under one banner, and armed

* The tribute exacted by the Golden Horde.

† Ivan III., first Czar of Russia, who married Sophia, the niece of Constantine Palæologus, shortly after the fall of Constantinople, and was by her encouraged to rise against the Tartar chiefs.

them to throw off the Tartar yoke. A third monastery to the right of the Simeonoff, Donskoi by name, is an echo of the first victory of St. Sergius, the destroyer of Mamai, the Tartar chief, and whose image carried by Demetrius "Donskoi" (of the Don) is said to have saved Russia a second time, when the prince we have just mentioned defeated Ghirei Sahib of the Crimea, who had been "gloating over Moscow" from the Koolik hills. "At the foot of this picturesque eminence, now shaded by tranquil groves, flows in peace the river Moskva, like the Roman Tiber, the witness of innumerable battles, and which has drunk deep of the enemies' blood. But let the redness of the battles be forgotten; the flowing waves have carried all away with them. Now the river gaily waters its green banks, with its gardens and its willow-trees, and curls like a dark blue riband among them, until at last it flows through the magnificent city of churches and palaces; then, dashing in a sounding torrent against the arches of the bridges as against the strings of a harpsichord, it murmurs past the grey walls of the Kremlin, which loves to admire itself in the mirror of its surface, with all its cupolas and battlements, rejoicing in its golden-headed glory. It again dashes its waves against the other arches, and still murmuring its peaceful song glides away like a playful child from the glance of its venerable mother, the city, into the free lap of its own groves and meadows, to the flocks which are folded in the green fields of the Simeonoff monastery." Then the Kremlin goes to sleep with Moscow at its feet; "but around it walks the moon in the heavens, as if watching over the holy city, together with the sacred eikons illuminated by the lamps at the entrance of every church. How consoling, both for the eye and the heart, is this combination of the earthly and the heavenly light! And yonder, where the broad rays of the moon do not penetrate, impeded by the masses of churches and towers, like a bright star in the darkness burns the golden halo which

enshrines the face of the Virgin, smiling benignantly with her heavenly child upon the passing devotees. All is still, and as if dead—if it be possible to be dead in the Kremlin, where the very corpses sleep in their shrines as if in their nightly beds.* To the south, the Moscow river is neither heard nor seen; the only sound is when the wind agitates the chains which hang from the crosses that surmount the churches and towers, or when one of the tuneful sisters leads a general chorus, and striking the hours counts the time as a rich man counts his treasure. Or suddenly from Ivan Veliki rises the drawling call of the watchman, which is answered from all the gates, and then again the grey Kremlin is left to its nightly silence, its peaceful rest, in the midst of which, from the abundance of heavenly watching, that of men seems superfluous."

Karamsin has also written some eloquent pages concerning the Kremlin, regarded, as might be expected, from an historical point of view. From the Kremlin battlements the remains of Demetrius the Impostor were fired off in the direction of Poland, whence the invasion had proceeded. Beneath its walls, in the Red Place, the massacre of the Strelitzes, or musketeers, who rose against Peter the Great, was directed by that monarch in person. There too—more glorious recollection—Prince Pojarski and Minin, the cattle-dealer of Nijni Novgorod, liberated Moscow from the Polish yoke; their statues mark the spot where their last decisive victory was gained, and through the Kremlin's Holy Gate, which faces it (and beneath which no one may pass without uncovering), Pojarski made his triumphal entry after driving out the invaders. In the Kremlin Dmitri Donskoi hoisted his black flag, when he marched against Mamai the Tartar; and here Ivan the Great trod under foot the image of the

* In the cathedral of the Archangel Michael, the burial-place of the grand princes and czars, the coffins are exposed in the body of the church.

Khan, to which as Grand Prince of Moscow he was called upon to do obeisance. The spot is shown where Demetrius the Impostor fell, in jumping from one of the windows at the back of the palace. On the threshold of the cathedral of the Assumption the young Czar Michael, first of the Romanoffs, received the congratulations and protestations of fidelity from the people, by whom he had just been elected.

In fact, the Kremlin is the heart of Moscow, which is the heart of all Russia. Many writers speak of the Kremlin as if it were a palace or a cathedral, or both, whereas it is a distinct quarter of the city, containing palaces, cathedrals, churches, monasteries, arsenals, the Imperial treasury, the senate, the residence of the commandant, the office of the Holy Synod, the city granary, the ancient college, the private mansions of Prince Troubetzkoi and Count Sheremetieff, &c. Originally all Moscow was in the Kremlin, which is a large irregular polygon, with lofty dentellated walls (formerly surrounded by a moat), having a tower at each angle. The present walls and towers were built by two Italian architects, Marco and Pietro Antonio, during the reign of the Grand Duke Ivan Vassilievitch (afterwards the Czar Ivan III., surnamed the Great), in place of the original one constructed by Demetrius Donskoi as a rampart against the Tartars. It would be difficult to say to what kind of architecture the battlements, towers, and gates belong, but they are more Gothic than anything else. Every tower and every gate (of which there are five) is of different construction, though presenting general points of resemblance; and in the interior the cathedrals, churches, and public buildings are of all periods and styles, the most prevalent being the old Russian, or Russo-Byzantine, while the most striking incongruity is caused by the Italian architecture of the magnificent palace, erected not many years since by the native artist, Tonn. The Krem-

lin stands on the highest of the seven hills (more or less) on which Moscow is built—a peculiarity which has made Madame de Staël call it, very incorrectly, "the Tartar Rome:" (we have just said that the Kremlin, which, in the first instance, constituted the entire capital, was erected as a protection *against* the Tartars.) In the course of time houses were built on all sides of it, except on the banks of the Moskva, at its foot; and as early as the fourteenth century Demetrius Donskoi found it necessary to practise the manœuvre which was afterwards adopted on a larger scale by Alexander's generals in 1812, and on a smaller by Prince Gortschakoff at Sebastopol in 1855. Demetrius, attacked by the Lithuanians, set fire to the exterior town, which was entirely consumed, and retired within the Kremlin, or "fortress," where he defended himself until the approach of winter caused the enemy to retire. Exterior Moscow was rebuilt, but was again frequently in part, and sometimes almost entirely, a prey to fire—the result either of accident or of contests between the Russians and the Tartars, the Lithuanians, or the Poles. At one time the chief market of Moscow was the house-market, where burnt-out proprietors could obtain any kind of wooden domicile they required at a moment's notice.

Except perhaps Constantinople, no town in Europe affords such a varied and picturesque view as is obtained in Moscow from the terrace of the Kremlin, or *of* Moscow from the Sparrow Hills, whence the whole city is seen in the form of a vast amphitheatre. From these heights the vanguard of Napoleon's army obtained their first glimpse of the Russian national capital, which they had marched a thousand miles in order to destroy. Then, as now, the spectator from the Sparrow Hills found a most magnificent panorama extended at his feet. Moscow, it is true, is at some miles' distance; but the atmosphere of the north is so transparent, and the city is so completely free from

smoke,* that not a line or a tint in its picturesque and richly-coloured architecture is lost. High above the mass of buildings rises the Kremlin—a pyramid of cupolas, either of burning gold or of bright ultramarine spangled with gilt stars, surrounded by a crowd of other cupolas, with innumerable steeples and belfries in the form of minarets. The grey dentellated walls of the old fortress are relieved by the green slope which leads from the lofty terrace to the banks of the river, and these banks, as well as the Alexander gardens which adjoin them, are covered with magnificent trees. The city itself is full of green spots, for in its very heart there are large gardens; and the most varied effect is produced by the coloured roofs of the houses, of which some are light green and others dark red.

Equally astonishing, though less perfect as pictures, are the views from the tower of Ivan Veliki, to describe which would be to describe all Moscow, to say nothing of the environs. This "golden-headed giant" forms one of the corners of the celebrated "Square of the Cathedrals," which represents all that is most sacred in the Sacred Kremlin. At its foot lies the "great bell of Moscow," whose dimensions travellers have not found it worth while to exaggerate, and which is twenty feet seven inches high and twenty-two feet eight inches in diameter, while it weighs no less than 12,327 pouds.† It was cast in the reign of the Empress Anne, and during the process the inhabitants of Moscow threw gold and silver into the furnaces, of which there were four. This bell, or "Kolokol"—"Tsar Kolokol," "King Bell," it is called—at present stands on a pedestal of masonry, against which lies a fragment broken from the monster's side. Out of this another ex-

* Except for less than an hour in the early morning, when the wood in the stoves is being charred. After that the chimneys are closed from above.

† A poud is equal to thirty-six English pounds.

cellent bell might be formed, as Eve was formed out of Adam's rib. The story of the bell having been hung in a belfry, and, consequently, of its having fallen during the conflagration of that belfry, and buried itself in the ground, is probably a fable. No traveller appears to have seen it hanging; and it seems to us, after examining the conflicting statements on the subject, that it was cast in the hole where it lay until a few years since, and that the breach in the side was the result of a flaw in the casting. Another enormous bell, actually hanging in the tower of Ivan Veliki, and which is used on very important occasions, such as the festivals of Easter and Christmas, or the coronation of an emperor, was brought in triumph from Novgorod when that city was sacked and its republic destroyed by the Czar Ivan IV. Mr. Bayard Taylor, who is *sans peur*, like his illustrious namesake, but not always *sans reproche* on the score of accuracy, states that the sound of this bell is as loud as the report of several pieces of cannon. It appeared to us far less loud; but perhaps the waves of air put into motion by its harmonious vibrations would extend quite as far as those produced by the dull roar of artillery. Standing in the belfry by the side of the ringers (who strike the clapper against the side), we found every fibre in our body tremble, when a bell of far less dimensions than those of the Novgorod giant was being sounded. The second largest of the series of thirty-two bells which occupy the various stories of Ivan Veliki—singly at the top, and lower down in clusters of two, three, and four—fell towards the end of February, 1855, breaking through the flooring of the chamber in its terrible descent, and killing several members of the custodian's family, who lived immediately underneath on the ground-floor. The catastrophe, sad enough in itself, was regarded as the omen of a far greater calamity; and the day afterwards the news was received in Moscow of the Emperor Nicholas's death.

The tower of Ivan V eliki stands apart from the cathedrals; and in many of the ancient Russian churches the belfry is thus separated entirely from the body of the building.

The three principal cathedrals in the square we have mentioned are those of the Assumption, the Annunciation, and the Archangel Michael. The space between these edifices is enclosed by an iron railing, and the square altogether is scarcely larger than the courtyard of St. James's Palace. The most striking peculiarity in the Russian churches and cathedrals is the number and singular form of the cupolas. The prototype of these bulbous domes is neither found in the cathedral of St. Sophia at Constantinople, nor in the most ancient churches of Greece, Asia Minor, and the Archipelago. Some writers have attempted to trace their origin to China, but the Chinese cupolas are concave, while those of Russia are convex; besides which, the Chinese owe what monuments they possess to the Mongols. To some, who have supposed that the model of the Russian cupola may have come from Asia, it has been objected, probably without reason, that a warlike, nomadic race like the Tartars, living in camps, and not in cities, could scarcely have been in a position to teach architecture to the nations they had conquered. It is known, however, that in Persia there are tombs surmounted by cylinders, with cupolas at the top, the form of which is very like those of Russia; and there is certainly a great resemblance between the cupolas and belfries of Moscow and the domes and minarets of Delhi and all the principal cities of Hindostan. M. le Comte de Laveau, secretary to the Moscow Imperial Society of Naturalists, concludes, in his description of that city, that the body of the Russian churches is Byzantine, that the cupolas have been borrowed from the East, and that the architectural ornaments are of a mixed style, modified according to the taste of the century to which the Italian or German

architects who constructed them belonged. As a general rule, every church has five cupolas; one at each corner of the building, which is in the form of a Greek cross, and one larger one, of precisely the same form, in the centre. The illustrious Nikon, patriarch of Moscow—who restored the correct text of the Russian Bible, into which, through the carelessness and ignorance of copyists, numerous errors had crept, and who thereby created a body of dissenters (*raskolniki*), that still retain the old and incorrect version—was reproached with having introduced churches with five cupolas instead of one, as if to symbolize the four Eastern patriarchs, with himself in the middle, the greatest of all. The five cupolas, however, existed long before in the church of Saint Sophia in Novgorod, and are evidently imitated from the churches of Constantinople, of the most celebrated of which the Novgorod St. Sophia is known to be a copy. Although five is by far the most usual number of the domes on a Russian church, some have three, some two, some only one, while others have as many as seven, and the fantastic "Vassili Blagennoi," outside the Kremlin, possesses no less than thirteen. In this extraordinary edifice every variety of colour is employed, and the towers and cupolas are of every conceivable and inconceivable shape. Of the former none are regular, of the latter none are smooth, like the ordinary onion-shaped domes. One of the cupolas is cut in facettes like a pine-apple, another is striped like a melon, a third is in folds like a turban, and a fourth suggests an artichoke. As a whole, the church may be not inaptly compared to a mass of stalactites reversed. A popular legend relates that Ivan the Terrible, for whom Vassili Blagennoi was built, put out the eyes of the architect, to prevent him repeating it. However that may have been, at present it is quite unique.

Each dome in the Russian churches is surmounted by a slender gilt cross, secured and adorned by thin gilt chains. On many of them a crescent is seen beneath the

cross, this superposition of the emblem of Christianity over that of Mahomedanism being intended as a symbol of the triumph of the Russians over their Tartar oppressors. The exterior walls are sometimes covered with frescoes; or they are painted uniformly in green or dark red, and occasionally in some other colour. The church of one of the convents near Moscow has dove-coloured walls and silver domes.

Another peculiarity of the Russian churches is their smallness compared with those of other countries. This may be explained by the severity of the Russian climate. As in all the Eastern churches, the interior is completely divided into two unequal portions by the iconostasis, behind which is the "holy of holies," inaccessible to women. The iconostasis is covered all over with "images." It has three doors communicating with the altar—two at the sides for the clerks and members of the choir, and one in the middle, through which the priest comes forth to offer the sacrament to the congregation, to read the Gospel, or to preach. The choir stand in two divisions on each side of a raised space in front of the iconostasis. These semi-choruses chaunt the responses alternately, but sing the canticles and psalms together. We have said that the church music is unaccompanied. Much of it is very beautiful, and no one who has once heard them can forget the effect of the simple responses in the Litany. The high voices sing only the third (repeated several times), and alternately the second and the fourth notes of the scale, always ending on the third—the other voices producing successively the tonic, the subdominant, the dominant, and finally the tonic chords.

There are no seats in the interior. The congregation kneel on the ground, without any distinction between rich and poor.

The service of the Russian is precisely the same as that of the Greek Church, except that it is performed in old Russian or Slavonian instead of modern Greek, and that

the music of the chaunts is different (thanks, as we have explained, to the musical reform accomplished by M. Lvoff). Indeed, the service is the same in all the Eastern churches; and when the Church of Georgia, which had stood alone since the fourth century, was united fifty years since to that of Russia, it was found that not the slightest variation existed between the two rituals, even in the smallest ceremonies.

The difference between the Russian and other Eastern Churches is one not of doctrine nor of ceremony, but merely of hierarchy. Each of the other Eastern Churches has a patriarch at its head, while that of Russia, though it has never ceased to hold intimate communion with the Church of Constantinople, from which it derived its faith, is governed by a synod of archimandrites and metropolitans, under the superintendence of the Emperor, aided by a procurator. The present procurator of the holy synod is M. Mouravieff, the learned and accomplished historian of the Russian Church,* and author of "Letters on the Ritual of the Orthodox Eastern Church," "A Journey to the Holy Places," and "A Journey to the Holy Places of Russia." M. Mouravieff has the rank of chamberlain, which is equivalent to that of cavalry general. Hence the ingenious statements published in France and reproduced in England during the war, to the effect that the direction of the Russian Church was in the hands of a cavalry officer, who was in the habit of going down to the synod in his jack-boots, and of treating the bishops and archbishops in true barrack-room style. Although in the importance it attaches to ceremonials, in the practice of confession, and in some other respects, the "Orthodox" Church resembles that of Rome, and differs from that of England, there are fewer differences between Anglicans and Greeks—above all,

* Mouravieff's "History of the Russian Church" has been translated into English by the Rev. Mr. Blackmore, who was for many years English minister at Cronstadt.

Russo-Greeks—than between Anglicans and Romans, or Romans and Greeks. Thus, in William III. and Peter the Great's reign, when a correspondence took place between the English bishops and the Russian synod, with a view to the union or rather communion of the two Churches, the only point of disagreement that remained after several epistles had been exchanged was on the subject of images, or eikons; and the Russian synod had just explained themselves satisfactorily on this point, when the project of alliance was suddenly brought to an end—merely interrupted, as it was thought at the time—by Peter's death. It is almost needless to say, that in the Eastern Church images are not themselves objects of adoration; indeed, the believer is expressly cautioned against such an abuse of the holy eikons in the catechism published by the metropolitan of Moscow, Philaret. But it is equally certain that special virtues are attached by the ignorant and superstitious—or let us rather say, the superstitious, of whom numbers are far from being ignorant in the ordinary sense of the word—to particular paintings, as to relics and charms. Thus, on moving to a new house, every devout inhabitant of Moscow feels it necessary to receive a visit from the large, highly decorated, richly jewelled picture of the Iberian Virgin,* formerly of Mount Athos, and now of the little chapel outside the gate leading to the Red Place. Any other picture of the Virgin would be considered less efficacious; in proof of which we need only mention that the Iberian Virgin is frequently engaged all day long, and that the faithful will put themselves to any inconvenience, and receive her visit at any period of the night, or early morning, when she happens to be free, rather than dispense with it. In the cathedral of the Assumption is the image of St. Antiopos, the martyr, to whom, or rather to which, it is

* The Iberian Virgin, like the metropolitan, always rides in a coach and six; her postilions have their heads uncovered, but in winter they are allowed to wrap handkerchiefs round them.

only necessary to pray, in order to be cured of the most inveterate toothache; certainly, it would not be considered that any other portrait of St. Antiopos would serve the same purpose. Nor do worshippers confine themselves, in accordance with the precept of the Church, to invoking the intercession of saints. They pray to them directly and finally for certain special objects. Indeed, the general body of the laity cannot be expected to understand the very fine distinctions drawn for them by the clergy. A member of the Eastern Church may worship an image, provided the image be painted, but not graven. On the other hand, graven images and statues must not only not be worshipped, they must not even be introduced into a church—though *bassi* and *alti relievi* are tolerated: the figures may be in the highest possible relief as long as they are not detached from the wall. In the same way there is nothing in the doctrines of the Greek Church to justify prayers for the dead, but, nevertheless, the dead are prayed for. Nor, according to its teaching, is the Virgin worthy of that adoration which she in practice receives.

Not only is celibacy not enforced on the clergy, except in the higher ranks, the occupants of which are appointed from the monasteries, but the parish priest is obliged to be married before he can be ordained. We have seen it stated that the parish priest—who cannot be married a second time—must, on the death of his wife, retire to a monastery; but we know, of our own knowledge, that this is not the case. At the same time, as the priest cannot obtain any advancement without entering a monastery, many of them, as widowers, adopt a course which, as married men, would not have been open to them. The Sacrament—to mention another difference between the Greek and Latin Churches—is in the former administered to the laity in both kinds; and there are other divergences on purely doctrinal points, such as the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father *through*

the Son, and not from the Father *and* the Son: but, in spite of all this—to say nothing of the fact that the authority of the Pope has never been recognized by the Russians, and that, as in England, the sovereign of the country is the head of the Church—an Italian would certainly find the religious customs of Russia far more in accordance with his notions of orthodoxy than an Englishman would with *his*. If the English bishops had ever visited Russia, their correspondence with the holy synod would, we think, have been very brief. But, looking at the two from an Anglican point of view, it is impossible not to admit that the Græco-Russian has decided advantages over the Roman Church. Thus by the former the service is performed in the national tongue, and the Scriptures are allowed to circulate freely. It is true that the Church-Slavonian differs somewhat from modern Russian, but the peasants, whose invariable instructor, when they have one at all, is the village priest, are taught to read the old before the modern language. A certain Russian version of the Scriptures is said to have been prohibited some years since, by the advice of Philaret, the metropolitan of Moscow, but only for the same reasons which induced Nikon to object to the more ancient of the Slavonian versions. It was, said our informant, full of inaccuracies.* The author of "Russia by a Recent Traveller," states that Philaret once interfered to prevent the sale of a geological work, on the ground that its account of the creation of the world differed from that contained in Genesis. This does not agree with the fact that the metropolitan of Moscow gave every countenance to the professor of natural history at the Moscow University, when some of the priests had suggested that his lectures ought to be discontinued, nor with his publication (shortly after the suggestion in question) of his

* Since writing the above, we have learned that a modern Russian version of the Scriptures has been published under the auspices of Philaret.

commentaries on Genesis, in which the theory of the world's creation in periods, and not in days, is set forth. Philaret has the reputation of being the most learned, eloquent, and enlightened prelate of the Russian Church, as he is also the oldest. We find from his published sermons that one of the best, "The Voice in the Wilderness," was delivered in 1812, when he was already metropolitan, and that it has an indirect reference to the calamity which had just fallen upon Moscow. This prelate is also a man of great patriotic feeling. On one occasion, at the Troitza Monastery, of which the metropolitan of Moscow is archimandrite, he preached a remarkable sermon to the Emperor Nicholas on the duties of a sovereign, which of course never was published. Recently, when Alexander II. issued his first circular to the nobles in reference to the emancipation of the peasants, he delivered in the Tchoudoff Monastery (in the Kremlin) an admirable address concerning the duties of the various classes to the Emperor, and of the landed proprietors to their slaves. This discourse was published in the Russian papers, and a translation of it appeared in one of our own journals, and has since been reprinted by the Rev. Mr. Christmas in his "Preachers and Preaching."

Philaret must now be nearly eighty years of age. He is a little emaciated old man, with delicate features, long white hair, sunken eyes, and no voice. When he begins his sermon he is literally inaudible; but gradually, as he warms with his theme, his tongue becomes loosened, his eyes brighten, and his words produce the most powerful effect on his listeners. The last time we heard him, in the Tchoudoff Monastery, although he performed the service, he was unable to deliver his sermon, which was read for him by one of the attendant clergy, who stood by the metropolitan's side on the steps in front of the iconostasis. At the conclusion of the sermon the congregation, which filled the monasterial church in every part, crowded towards the metropolitan to receive his bless-

ing and kiss his hands. Philaret leads a life of almost unexampled abstemiousness, both as regards food and sleep. He works incessantly, and is said to visit the slightest shortcoming on the part of any of his clergy with great severity. This makes the Moscow people say of him that his daily fare consists of "one gudgeon and three priests."

Augustin, Archbishop of Moscow, is remembered by the discourses which he delivered in the presence of Alexander and the Moscow militia in 1812. Innocent, Archbishop of Odessa, preached a series of eloquent sermons to the garrison of Sebastopol during the siege. The greater part of these were afterwards published in one of the St. Petersburg reviews. A very remarkable sermon delivered by Innocent, many years since, on a Good Friday, has been published by Baron Haxthausen in his valuable work on Russia. As the baron's version, of which the substance was furnished to him by a Russian student, is, as it at present stands, somewhat inexact, we do not hesitate to give a literal translation of it. We must premise, that on Good Friday a coffin is placed in a conspicuous part of the church, to remind the congregation of the Saviour's agony and death.

"Once a pious hermit had to say something to his brethren, who were waiting to be instructed by him. Penetrated with a deep sense of the poverty of mankind, the old man, instead of any kind of instruction, exclaimed, 'Brethren, let us weep!' and they all fell upon the ground, and poured forth tears. I know, brethren, that you now expect words of instruction from me; but my lips involuntarily close at the sight of our Lord sleeping in the coffin. Who dare speak while He is silent? And can anything be said to you of God and his truth, and of man and his untruth, than which these wounds are not a hundredfold more piercing? Those who are not affected by them, can they be moved by the feeble word of man? On Golgotha there was no preaching;

there, there was only sobbing and smiting of breasts. And by the side of the coffin is no place for preaching, but for repentance and tears. Brethren, our Lord and Saviour is in the coffin! Let us pray and weep! Amen."

Moscow, which, according to tradition, had at one time "forty times forty" churches, has lost the greater portion of them in the terrible conflagrations which, from time to time, in peace as in war, have ravaged the city. At present it has upwards of six hundred churches, and about a dozen monasteries. The most celebrated religious edifice in Moscow, and perhaps in all Russia, is the cathedral of the Assumption, where the emperors are crowned, and which forms the north side of the square in the Kremlin. Its foundation dates from 1325, and it was originally built by an architect from Byzantium. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, when the Greek empire had ceased to exist, the cathedral was nearly in ruins. The Russians, who had hitherto depended upon Constantinople for all their architects and artists, determined to rebuild it themselves, but two years afterwards the edifice fell to pieces. Then Aristotle of Bologna (Fioraventi) was sent for. On his arrival the Italians went to examine the cathedral at Vladimir, which, though nearly destroyed by the Tartars, was esteemed by the Russians as a model of religious architecture. On his return to Moscow, Aristotle commenced the cathedral which exists at the present day, and it was consecrated in 1479. A writer in the "Quarterly Review" (No. 51) has justly remarked, that although some of the exterior ornaments of this cathedral may have been borrowed from the churches of Lombardy, it cannot, speaking generally, be said to present any characteristics of the Italian style of architecture. This writer observes, that in some respects it bears more resemblance to our Saxon and Norman churches. The porch of the southern entrance, for instance, is very like those seen in old English churches; the narrow-arched windows are Old-English, and the row of arches

all round the building, at a considerable height from the ground, may be looked upon as a Norman decoration. The body of the building, as in the church of St. Sophia at Novgorod and in all the Byzantine churches, is almost square; and the gilt roof is supported by four enormous pillars, covered all over with paintings. The cathedral of the Assumption, though larger than the majority of churches in Russia, holds but a small congregation. It is upwards of a hundred feet long, and less than a hundred feet broad, and when the present Emperor was crowned, it was impossible to find accommodation in it for more than eight hundred spectators.

Nearly every painting and ornament in this cathedral is associated with some important event in Russian history. The chapels of St. John and St. Peter were founded in 1328, to commemorate the suppression of an insurrection. The Glorification of the Virgin—in the painted ceiling of the centre cupola—was executed in 1425, in celebration of the repulse of the Tartars, who had advanced to the banks of the Oka, some twenty miles from Moscow. Close to the relics of St. Philip, the metropolitan who braved the fury of Ivan the Terrible, and reproached him openly with his cruelties (to which he owed his exile, and, it is thought, his assassination), is the image of the martyr Dmitri, who suffered death at the hands of the Tartars; and among the tombs of the metropolitans are those of Philaret and Hermogenes, who were thrown into prison by the Poles for refusing to sanction the accession of Ladislas, the Polish prince, to the Russian throne.* The sacristy

* Hermogenes died soon after his arrest. Philaret, after the final expulsion of the Poles, was carried away captive by them in their retreat from Moscow (1612), and was kept nine years a prisoner in Poland. On his return to Russia, Philaret found his son, Michael Feodorovitch, the first of the Romanoffs, elected to the throne. We must add, that Philaret was the metropolitan's monachal name, and that he had originally been christened Feodor. Hence "Michael *Feodorovitch*" (the son of Feodor).

contains a gold cross, said to have belonged to the Emperor Constantine, which Peter the Great wore at Pultava, and which is said to have saved him from an otherwise fatal bullet. The miraculous image of the Virgin of Pskoff was surrounded with diamonds in 1740 by Anna Ivanovna, in honour of her victories over the Turks and Tartars; and there is another Virgin offered by the same sovereign, in celebration of the capture of Dantzic and the happy termination of the war (1733) against the French and Poles. Some of the richest vases in the cathedral were given by Catherine II. in memory of victories over the Turks; and a magnificent tabernacle, which, at various times, has contained the most important archives of Russia, was presented by Prince Potemkin, after one of his battles in the south. This tabernacle represents Moses receiving the Tables of the Law on Mount Sinai; it is about three feet high and eight or nine inches broad, and is made entirely of gold and silver, containing nineteen pounds of the former and twenty of the latter metal. A silver lustre, weighing four thousand pounds, given to the cathedral by the Empress Catherine, was carried away by the French in 1812; it has since been replaced by another, weighing about eight hundred pounds, made from a portion of the original silver, which the Cossacks took back during the retreat. On the left of the holy gate is the celebrated Virgin painted by the evangelist St. Luke, sent to Russia nearly a thousand years since from Constantinople. It is known as the Virgin of Vladimir (the ancient capital),* and is said to have been removed to Moscow in 1395. The whole of the precious stones by which it is surrounded are valued at 200,000 roubles, and the largest of the diamonds is alone said to be worth 80,000. The Russians acknowledge only two other Virgins by St. Luke, of which one is in the Morea, the other in the island of Cyprus;

* Kiev, Vladimir, Moscow, were in succession the capital of Russia.

but we need scarcely remark that this computation would not be accepted by the Latin Church. The St. Luke's Virgin at Moscow has a black face, and appears to have three hands, which proves that St. Luke, though a physician, was not an anatomist. Montaigne speaks of the Veronica ("true image") seen by him in Italy as "the face of a sombre and obscure colour, in a square like a great mirror."

The other most important eikons in the cathedral of the Assumption are that of the Saviour, given by the Greek Emperor Emanuel (the Saviour is represented sitting on a throne, holding in his left hand the Gospel of St. John), and that of the Assumption of the Virgin, painted by Peter, the first metropolitan of Moscow. The visitor to this cathedral cannot fail to be struck by the curious picture of "The Last Judgment," in which sinners are represented dancing on hot coals, with hooks through their tongues, &c. Probably this very original painting is kept in memory of the one which is said to have determined the conversion of Prince Vladimir to the Christian faith, and which was painted by St. Methodius. Vladimir, Grand Prince of Kiev, being in want of a religion, applied for information as to the faith of each to a Jew, a Mahomedan, a Christian of the Western, and a Christian of the Eastern Church. To the Jew, Vladimir objected that his nation, dispersed throughout the world, was evidently forsaken of God; to the Mahomedan, that his religion forbade the use of wine. After he had sent ambassadors to Rome and Constantinople, and had been told by them that at the former city they were much impressed by the solemnity of the service, but that at the latter they heard songs of angels, and were transported to another world, an eikon, representing the reward of the blessed and the punishment of the wicked, was shown to the grand prince, and this decided him to embrace the Greek faith.

The cathedral of the Archangel Michael is celebrated

as the burial-place of the Russian grand princes and czars. Here lie the remains of Michael of Tchernigoff, who was slain by Batu Khan for refusing to kneel to the Mongol idols; of the Czar Vassili Shouisky, who died a prisoner in Poland, where his body remained twenty-three years; and of Peter, the son of the Czar of Kasan, taken prisoner by the Russians. The tomb of Ivan the Terrible is covered with a black cloth, a distinction due to the fact of that bloodthirsty monarch having assumed the cowl half an hour before his death. The walls of this church are covered with frescoes representing various grand princes and czars, Michael Palæologus, the Greek emperor, and others. In ancient times it was the custom, in presenting a petition, to enter this church and lay the document on the coffin of one of the czars, whence no one but the sovereign dared to remove it.

The cathedral of the Annunciation is the third of the great cathedrals which, with the tower of Ivan Veliki and the terrace of the palace, form the grand square of the Kremlin. It is remarkable for its floor of agate and its nine cupolas, which, like the roof, are richly gilt. The cross of the centre cupola (through which the church receives a faint, mysterious light) is, according to popular tradition, of solid gold. All the interior of the Annunciation, and the walls of the vestibule by which it is approached, are covered with frescoes, which date from the end of the fifteenth century (the original church dates from the end of the fourteenth), and are highly interesting as specimens of Byzantine art. The frescoes represent sacred subjects, around which the painter has placed portraits of various philosophers and historians of Greece, such as Aristotle, Anacharsis, Zeno, Plutarch, Thucydides, and even Menander. It is sufficiently tolerant to admit a pagan comic dramatist into a Christian cathedral; but lest any one should go so far as to mistake either of the Greek sages for saints, the artist has written the name

underneath each figure, besides which they are painted without haloes. In their hands are rolls on which sentences from the Gospel are inscribed, as if to indicate that the wisdom of the Greek philosophers arose from a prescience of the Christian doctrines. These paintings were restored during the reign of Peter the Great, and again retouched in 1770, under Catherine II., who gave special orders that the style should in no way be interfered with.

Each of the cathedrals in the Kremlin was desecrated one way or another by Napoleon. Many of the most precious pictures and relics were removed before the French entered, but the notches made by the invaders' knives are still visible in the gold frame of one of the pictures in the Annunciation. "They thought it was brass," said, with a smile, the custodian, who pointed out to us the curiosities of the cathedral—and perhaps, after all, they were right. The Assumption was turned into a stable, and Napoleon caused the coffin of St. Jonas the patriarch to be opened, that he might see whether his "uncorrupted body" (as the Russians say of their saints) was really incorrupt; "but," says a devout Russian, who kindly supplied us with many interesting particulars respecting the holy places of his country, "the saint shook his finger at him, and the Emperor started back in terror." The Kremlin was mined by the French in several places, but the numerous explosions which took place did not destroy any of the most important buildings. Several towers, however, were thrown down, and the gate of St. Nicholas, with a turret which surmounts it, was split from the base to the summit. An inscription on this gate states that the eikon of St. Nicholas affixed to the porch sustained no injury from the explosion, nor was the glass broken, nor the fire which burns perpetually before it extinguished. Another tradition tells how a cannon was placed opposite the holy gate, and fired three times in succession at its tutelary image; the third

time the gun burst, and killed several of the artillerymen. On the other hand, the Kremlin possesses a striking memorial of Napoleon's retreat in the shape of 875 cannons, of which 365 were taken from the French, 189 from the Austrian, 123 from the Prussian, and the remainder from the Italian, Neapolitan, Bavarian, Westphalian, Saxon, Hanoverian, Wurtemburgian, Spanish, Dutch, and Polish troops. These pieces are at present placed in rows in front of the arsenal. Many of them are remarkable for their pretentious names, which contrast strangely with their present humble position. Thus they are inscribed the "Eagle," the "Conqueror," the "Invincible," &c. It has been proposed that these pieces, of which the collective weight is about three hundred and fifty tons, should be melted down, and employed in the erection of a commemorative column; but they are far more suggestive, instructive, and generally interesting in their present form. It is right to add, that the proposition we mention proceeds from a Frenchman.

In front of a second arsenal are a decreasing and increasing series of colossal cannons, arranged in line, with the longest at the extremities, and the shortest in the centre, so that the muzzles describe an arc. The largest of these might have formed part of the terrible artillery imagined by Milton in "Paradise Lost." It is a four-thousand-eight-hundred-pounder, and weighs forty tons. The monster, however, is in all probability as harmless as the marble lions in the Alhambra. It has apparently never been fired, and is reported to be anything but a serviceable arm; but, for all that, it is a miracle of casting. An inscription on the gun informs us that it was cast in 1586 by a Russian master-founder named Chekoff, and by the orders of the Czar Feodor; and close to the muzzle the czar is represented on horseback, crowned and sceptred. Of these seven gigantic pieces (a most unmusical gamut, if they were to be fired) the smallest weighs nearly four tons.

At the back of the arsenal is the Imperial treasury, of which the interior is perhaps the most generally interesting sight in the Kremlin. This museum is full of personal and political memorials connected with the history of Russia, while it derives an archæological, and, to a certain extent, an ethnological value, from the fact that it contains the crowns, robes, armour, plates, &c., of all the Russian czars, with the arms used at various periods by all the Western, and a very large number of the Eastern nations, including the Mongols and several of the Siberian tribes. The term "barbaric splendour" is sometimes applied thoughtlessly, by writers on Russia, to genuine artistic magnificence—by which the malachite vases in the Hermitage, and indeed nearly everything in the imperial palaces, are characterized; but it may be applied with propriety to the massive gold plate of the Russian czars. Costly to the last degree of extravagance, the dishes, platters, spoons, and goblets have no merit of design whatever. They are only interesting in so far that they prove the gold spoons, dishes, &c., of the czars to have been identical in shape with the wooden ones of the peasants, as retained by them to the present day. Some of the most remarkable historical objects in the treasury are the crown of Prince Vladimir Monomachus, sent to him from Byzantium by the Emperor Alexis Commenus, in 1116; a crown, nearly two centuries older, which is said to have been given by the Greek Emperor to the Princess Olga, who was baptized at Constantinople in 946, shortly before the general conversion of Russia; the crowns of Astrakhan, Kasan, Siberia, Georgia, and lastly that of Poland. In another room are the Polish crown jewels and two thrones, removed from Warsaw, by order of Nicholas, after the suppression of the insurrection of 1831. In the vestibule of another portion of the treasury (the armoury) is the portrait of the Emperor Alexander I., at the foot of which lies a casket. The portrait is surrounded

by two fasces of flags, one of which is composed of the standards borne by the Russians against the Poles; the other, of those borne by the Poles in their attempt to regain their liberty. The casket contains the Polish Constitution granted by Alexander I., and abolished by Nicholas, who caused the document to be forwarded from Warsaw to its present resting-place. The flags on each side of the portrait are, doubtless, intended to explain the presence of the casket at its foot. In the same apartment are a quantity of halberds, with which the monks of the Troitza Monastery, near Moscow, defended their walls against the Poles in 1612. Two other highly interesting memorials in this museum are the litter on which Charles XII. was carried at Pultava, before he took to his horse; and a trunk and camp-bed belonging to Napoleon, which formed part of the baggage captured or left behind in 1812.

But the whole of the Kremlin generally, and in detail, is full of interest. We have said nothing of the monasteries, the synod, the senate, and various public offices which it contains. Of the Imperial palace we shall speak in the next chapter, but to describe the Kremlin satisfactorily a large volume would scarcely suffice.

CHAPTER XII.

POPULAR AND IMPERIAL FETES.

ONE of the most original and least known of those entertainments which the sovereign of Russia gives his subjects in honour of his coronation, is the fête of music and fireworks. On the occasion of the accession of Alexander II. it was held at a few miles' distance from Moscow, in front of one of the Cadet Corps, or Military Schools. This building, opposite which the transparencies and principal set pieces had been placed, stands at the end of a plain, which reminds one of the Champ des Mars; chiefly, perhaps, because the Cadet Corps suggests the Ecole Militaire. The long balcony which runs along the front of the building had been converted into "tribunes," that is to say, rows of seats had been erected in it, as well as in the rooms from which it is entered. The centre portion of the balcony had been hung with the usual Imperial colours (scarlet and gold), and converted into a magnificent state-box for the Emperor and his family. The rows of seats on each side of this state-box were reserved for the *corps diplomatique* and the "foreigners of distinction," as they are officially termed. The male occupants of these places were all in uniform or court dress, if we except one or two of the "foreigners of distinction," who distinguished themselves by appearing in black. The ladies, though they wore their bonnets, were all in evening dress; but it must be remembered that the grand staircase and principal suite of rooms in the Cadet Corps are worthy of a palace, and that every one who was present in the building was supposed to be there at the express invitation of the Emperor. We may add, while on the subject of the audience department

(and audience is the exact word, in the case of an entertainment which appealed so forcibly to their ears), that the balcony had been beautifully fitted up for the occasion, and that a brilliant suite of rooms was thrown open, in which a species of *conversazione* or improvised *soirée* took place after the fireworks.

The road by which the Emperor reached the Cadet Corps from the palace of the Kremlin was illuminated from one end to the other. His Majesty was accompanied by the Empress and the Grand Dukes, and wore the uniform of the old Preobrajensky regiment founded by Peter the Great. This is the regiment introduced in the *Etoile du Nord*, but the costume of the Preobrajensky guards in the opera differs entirely from the one worn by those distinguished warriors in real life, and is in fact that of the Paulovsky regiment, which in the time of Peter the Great had no existence. Of the crowd we can only say that it was enormous and compact; and between the Cadet Corps and the transparencies erected in front nothing was perceptible but a mass of upturned faces, which shone in the light of the first "signal" as their owners gazed towards the box of their Emperor. This was to be one of the truly popular *fêtes*, and in order that no one might have an excuse for missing it, the time at which it was to take place had been announced the previous day in all the churches of Moscow. Besides the fireworks there was to be a *concert monstre*, in which two thousand musicians belonging to the different military bands, and a thousand vocalists, were to take part. Among the musicians the whole of the military bands of the Guards were included.

In Russia we find system in everything, even in fireworks; and we were not surprised to see that the pyrotechnic display was regularly divided into so many parts, which were again subdivided into so many other parts, the whole tending to a magnificent conclusion in the shape of a *bouquet*. The *bouquet* itself had been pre-

pared in a most elaborate manner, and on the bridge leading to the firework-ground and for nearly a mile round it soldiers were stationed, with rockets at their side, ready to set light to them at a given signal. The signal was one not easy to mistake, being nothing less than the last note of "God save the Emperor," accompanied by cannon.

The fireworks with their accompaniment of music, and the music with its accompaniment of cannon, were arranged as follows:—There were five so-called "signals," each "signal" consisting of five separate discharges of bombs and war-rockets. At the end of each of the signals a transparency was illuminated, and as each transparency was lighted up the orchestra, or orchestra and chorus, executed a piece of music.

The rockets of the first signal were ignited by means of a butterfly-shaped lantern-rocket, which was lighted from the Emperor's box, and which flew through the air along an invisible wire to the place where the fireworks stood. Then a transparency representing the monument to Ivan Soussanin was illuminated, and the orchestra executed the finale to Glinka's "Life for the Czar."

The number of rockets fired off at each signal increased in arithmetical progression, and, in the third, each discharge numbered eighteen rockets or bombs. After the third signal the statue of Peter the Great was lighted up, and this was followed by the march of the Preobrajensky regiment, which is said to have been played at the battle of Pultava, M. Scribe (in the *Etoile du Nord*) going so far as to ascribe its composition to Peter the Great himself. The Preobrajensky regiment, we may here remark, derives its name from a cognominal *faubourg* at a few miles' distance from Moscow, where Peter, when a boy, formed his regiment of children, which at a later period contributed so much towards his success at Pultava, and which formed the nucleus of the Imperial Guard.

After the fifth signal (five times thirty-six bombs and

war-rockets) the large transparency in the centre—that of the Triumphal Arch of the Narva Barrier at St. Petersburg—was lighted up, and the chorus and orchestra commenced the national anthem, "God save the Czar," in which it was understood that a fundamental bass of an entirely new description would be introduced.

The air was executed for the first time in the ordinary manner, except that there were three thousand executants. It was then repeated with the new bass instruments, or cannons, which, without being quite so large as ophicleides, made considerably more noise. The cannon appeared to be played from the part written for the big drum, which it "doubled," or, more strictly speaking, centupled. Thus it marked the commencement of each bar and all the accentuated notes. Being quite a new instrument, the cannon was on this occasion intrusted to the *chef d'orchestre*, who fired it from a battery (we mean, of course, a galvanic one), and gave each sound with as much precision as if he had been touching a note on the piano. We need scarcely explain, that when we say precision, we mean precision of time and not of tone, in which latter quality the cannon appears to be slightly deficient.

It was Lvoff himself, the composer of the national hymn, who officiated as conductor and cannonier. He had forty-eight pieces of artillery at his disposal, with which to produce the forty-eight requisite bangs. These were arranged at a distance of some hundreds of yards from his rostrum, and were connected with it by means of wires attached, or attachable, to a galvanic battery. At the rehearsal, it had been found that the notes of the cannon were heard exactly five-sixteenths of a beat after the proper time; and as it was impossible, with due respect to the other instruments and to the ears of the audience, to bring the guns any nearer, the conductor had to fire each of them five-sixteenths of a beat, or five sixty-fourths of a bar, before the report was due. Thus

the roar of the artillery and the crash of the military bands were heard simultaneously. Nor was this all; for, in addition to the cannon, the final note of the air was accompanied by the explosion of the pyrotechnic *bouquet*, consisting of 21,000 Roman candles and 42,000 rockets.

Decidedly there was more noise than melody. But this was not a chamber concert. It was an illuminated out-of-door concert for the masses, and it was an impressive one.

But the finest of illuminations was that of Moscow itself, and it was carried out with a magnificence and taste which, by way of novelty, we would declare to be suggestive of a scene in the "Arabian Nights," were it not for the fact that no scene in the "Arabian Nights" ever gave us an idea of so much dazzling splendour.

Every house in the city was illuminated, and every house of importance was decorated with some illumination, in which the arrangement of the lamps produced effects of light, colour, and design, that were as novel as they were beautiful.

As a general rule, the churches and public buildings were illuminated in the true sense of the word; they were not made the mere pretexts for the display of a few coloured lamps combined into initials, but were lighted up by paper lanterns, or bright tallow-fed flames, so as to have their architectural beauties exhibited to the greatest advantage. Some of the belfries were illuminated by means of only one light placed inside, where it shone like the candle in the *petites chapelles* of the French children. Steeples of solid masonry were, on the other hand, lighted up from the base to the apex with circular rows of lamps, so close together as to make them look at a distance like pyramids of fire. The watch-towers, too, which are seen high above the houses, and which serve as places of observation for the firemen, who are perpetually on the look-out, were studded all over with variegated lamps, as if with so much beadwork.

In the Kremlin Gardens, the marble vases of the terraces were filled with illuminated bouquets, and the trees laden with artificial fruit represented by illuminated globes. Altogether, the lighting up of the Kremlin Gardens was a great success, and, like the illumination of the square in which the theatre stands, and of which it forms one side, showed that general and combined effects had been studied as well as separate ones.

The buildings in the Kremlin were illuminated in a mass. Their outlines of fire enabled the spectator to see every detail of the architecture, and the forms of the principal edifices were visible for miles round.

The *façade* of the arsenal, with its piles of cannon-balls, and its eight or nine hundred pieces of cannon taken from the French, was also lighted up very brilliantly; but the tower of Ivan Veliki, with its coloured lamps of red, blue, and green, standing on the highest ground, formed the most attractive object in the *ensemble* of the Kremlin.

Close to the Kremlin walls stands the church of St. Basil, the most thoroughly Russian of all the Moscow churches. Each of its fantastic cupolas was illuminated with circular rows of light, and all the salient points of its architecture (which, according to a well-known legend, cost the architect his eyes) were clearly brought out. The appearance of this church was the most striking effect in the whole illumination, except, perhaps, the aspect of the city on the further side of the river Moskva. As seen from the terrace of the Kremlin, every house seemed a square of fire, every street a long fiery line. It is said that 200,000 workmen and soldiers were employed at this illumination, and we can easily believe it; for Moscow is much larger than Paris, and the whole city was lighted up almost simultaneously.

Two of the most characteristic *fêtes* that take place in Russia on the occasion of the coronation, are the well-known dinner and ball which the Emperor gives to his

subjects. The former of these is held in the Petrovsky plains, near Moscow. I had received a ticket for one of the "tribunes," and, on ascending to take my place, found myself with my back to the Petrovsky Palace, with a number of long semicircular rows of tables on my right, an enclosure containing a rotunda erected for the Emperor immediately in front, and crowds of moujiks, moujiks' wives, and moujiks' children on all sides. Just then, rain began to fall, and before long it came down in torrents. Still the crowd continued to increase, and the most extraordinary thing about it, after the fact of its immense size, was, that a large proportion of its honourable members were standing upon the tables at which they were intended to have sat down and dined. I had seen the eight miles of tables the day before. They were then covered with white cloths nailed down to the wood, and upon them were sheep roasted whole, and dressed in brilliant scarlet jackets, sausages suspended from poles in rich festoons, pies by thousands, and cakes by tens of thousands. Early in the morning of the day appointed for the feast, the sheep had been cut up and placed on large wooden dishes, where they were to remain until the signal was given for the commencement of the banquet. This signal was to be the hoisting of a flag from the imperial rotunda at the moment of the Emperor's arrival. It appeared that the morning's rain, which had penetrated everywhere, had damped the flag to such an extent, that the soldier who had charge of it had doubted whether it could be hoisted with proper effect, and determined to satisfy himself on the point by making the experiment before the Emperor's arrival. The experiment was only too successful, and the exhibition of the flag was accepted as the signal for the commencement of the feast; it was commenced accordingly, and long before the arrival of the Emperor, everything had been eaten. Another explanation of the misunderstanding, however, made it the result of a deliberate intention. In Moscow the story

generally received was, that the contractor for the feast had supplied less food, and of inferior quality to what had been ordered; and that he had taken measures to have the banquet commenced and finished before the Emperor made his appearance. True or not, the story is at all events a well-deserved tribute to the dishonesty of the Russian official system, and its effect upon all who are connected with it.

The fountains of wine, beer, and tea, did not however begin to play until his Majesty made his appearance, and during the following quarter of an hour the scene was highly interesting. From the Petrovsky Palace, with its red turrets and its green dome, to the enclosure, in the middle of which a temporary palace of the most unpretending nature had been erected for the Emperor, the line was kept by the celebrated Circassian Guards, in their crimson uniforms covered with chain armour. At various points in the circumference of the enclosure, little summer-house structures had been raised for the accommodation of the military bands, which played throughout the *fête*. Right and left, at some little distance from the enclosure, and parallel to the Petrovsky Palace, were two ice-mountains (with artificial or imitation ice), looking like two suspension bridges; and at right angles to them, and considerably nearer the enclosure, were little theatres, resembling those of the *café concerts* in the Champs Elysées. There was also a circus, and the young lady who was its hope and its pride could be seen from the tribune of the *corps diplomatique* dancing elastically upon the back of her horse, until at length the rain had completely saturated the poor girl's clothes, and she looked in her white muslin dress, which clung round her limbs, like a fly just emerged from a milk-jug. There must have been wailing and lamentation too in the theatres proper; we mean those in which a species of legitimate drama was being performed: for we saw the *jeune premier* holding an umbrella over his curly head, while

the *ingénue* was obliged to conceal her charms beneath a macintosh. There were also swings, in which the swinging *dilettanti* were whirled round with a velocity which must have dried them as fast as they became soaked. It is seen, that in Russia the Emperor gives his people *panem et circenses*, and something more; they have also roasted sheep, and swings. Nor should we forget the climbing poles, with objects of popular ambition—such as sausages—at the top, rising like masts from the midst of the sea of moujiks.

The Emperor appeared between two showers. He rode a white horse, was followed by the usual brilliant staff, and was received with shouts of enthusiasm. After his departure the rain soon dispersed, we almost say dissolved, the crowd, who returned to their homes in the most orderly manner. There were no soldiers or police on the ground to interfere with the people; in fact, it is one of the people's privileges on these occasions to be left entirely to itself; and yet there were no accidents, and no disturbances likely to cause any. I passed thousands of the holiday-makers in returning to Moscow, and saw very few persons indeed who were not sober, peaceable, and generally well-behaved. Some had wooden spoons or mugs in their hands; others had little tubs which they wore on their heads, in order to be protected against the rain; many had on a little piece of the scarlet cloth which had been laid down on the road along which the Emperor had passed in the midst of his people; but every one had some reminiscence of this interesting *fête*, which only wanted a few rays of sunshine to make it a magnificent spectacle.

The ball, partly because it was independent of weather, but also for other reasons, was a far finer sight than the dinner. The people, too, felt that they were more immediately in the presence of the Emperor, and behaved better, decorous as their conduct on the whole had been in the Petrovsky plains. Thus they made no rush at the

refreshment tables, but took their tea, their mead, their lemonade, and their cakes, as they could get them. All these refreshments were served to them in china or on magnificent plate.

The first peculiarity about the masked ball at the Kremlin is, that no one wears a mask; and the second, that no one dances. There are no signs whatever remaining of the ancient masquerade, though, owing to the great variety of costume to be met with (especially among the women) in the immense dominions of the Czar, of which every portion seemed to be represented, the entertainment has the appearance of an unusually fancy-dress ball. The only semblance of dancing that now remains is a promenade executed to the music of a *polonaise*, and led by the Emperor himself, who gives his hand to the Empress, to one of the principal ambassadresses, or to some other lady of distinction. The rooms thrown open on the occasion are six in number, two of which are in the Terema or ancient apartments of the Czar, the others forming part of the New Palace which was built by the Emperor Nicholas, and which adjoins the Terema.

At one end of the suite is the Granovitaya Palata, the throne-room of the Terema, in which the imperial banquet took place, immediately after the coronation. At the other extremity is the Hall of St. Andrew, the throne-room of the New Palace.

The Granovitaya Palata is celebrated as the ancient reception-room of the Czars. Here they were in the habit of receiving their future brides; and a small window near the ceiling is shown, through which the Moscow princes, with more prudence than propriety, are said to have observed the young ladies at leisure while they were preparing to meet their intended husbands. On the occasion of the ball to the people this apartment was hung with crimson velvet, studded all over with gold eagles, as on the coronation-day; otherwise, its vaulted roof, and its simple, massive architec-

ture, would have presented a striking contrast to the brilliancy and richness of the apartments in the New Palace. On one side of the room were the thrones used for the coronation, which had been removed for the occasion from the cathedral of the Assumption. Nearly opposite the throne an enclosure had been formed by means of a light railing, within which the Emperor retired for a few minutes after making his promenade through the entire suite of rooms, commencing with the Hall of St. Andrew. The said enclosure contained a few chairs, a card-table with cards, a chalk pencil for marking the points, and a little hard, sharp brush for rubbing out the chalk marks. This compartment, however, is only a resting-place, and the only use of the cards is to aid in giving the appearance of a ball-room to the solemn, magnificent apartment, in which no one dances.

Of the apartments in the New Palace, the Hall of St. George is the most brilliant; in my opinion, altogether the most beautiful. It is decorated—or rather left without decoration—in a style which is altogether Russian. Its alabaster walls are merely relieved by a thin delicate gold moulding, and its white ceiling by gilt stars of the order of St. George. It is entirely without furniture, if we except the white benches or elongated stools with gilt feet, which are seen in the recesses at the back of the magnificent colonnade which faces the window. This colonnade is composed of ten pillars, whose dazzling whiteness reflects the light in every direction. The hall is lighted not only by chandeliers, but also by a continuous row of wax lights, extending all round the room, and placed at intervals of just sufficient distance to prevent contact.

The Hall of St. Andrew seems to have been carved out of rose-coloured marble. It is profusely decorated with gold ornaments, and is a most magnificent specimen of a palatial interior in the rich elaborated style, and probably, with the exception of the Apollo Gallery in the Louvre, the most magnificent in Europe. On one side of the hall

is a row of immense looking-glasses, on the other a double row of windows, through the lower of which is seen a balcony or arched terrace, illuminated with Chinese lanterns of various colours.

The Hall of St. Vladimir is a sort of ante-room to the new apartments, as the Holy Vestibule is to the old. The latter exists now exactly as it was built by the Czar Alexis Mikhailovitch (Peter's father), with the exception of the paintings which decorate the walls, and which were restored when the New Palace was erected. These paintings, without being of the Byzantine school, like nearly all the religious paintings of Russia, are eminently præ-Raffaelian. They represent "Constantine's Dream," "Joshua and the Angel," "The Patriarch Abraham receiving the Visit of the Holy Trinity," "Dmitri Donskoy being blessed by St. Sergius before his Victory over the Tartars," and "St. Vladimir, duke of Kieff, listening to the Exhortations of the Monks, who are exhibiting to him the Picture of the Last Judgment"—which, according to the Russian tradition, assisted materially in effecting his conversion to Christianity. The Emperor, as he walks from the Hall of St. Andrew to the Granovitaya Palata, and from the Granovitaya Palata to the Hall of St. Andrew, is followed by the ambassadors, the principal officials of state, and afterwards by all who choose to take part in the procession: no one, however, doing so who is not either in uniform or in court dress. Every gentleman leads a lady by the hand. The crowd of spectators—or guests, as we ought to call them—form a line on each side of the *cortège*.

The Emperor is literally among his people, he is literally in contact with them; for as he raises his hand to reply by a salute to the enthusiastic shouts with which he is everywhere received, he is sometimes unable to do so without touching the person next to him. But it must not be imagined that there is any rushing, or even pressing. The people have too much respect for their Emperor and

their host, who in his turn has full confidence in his subjects and his guests; for, as at all the other popular *fêtes* at Moscow, I noticed the entire absence of soldiers and police from among the people, and noticed too that their absence was appreciated. Those giants in bearskins under the colonnade are a party of Grenadiers of the court on duty at the palace, and have nothing to do with the question of order. And yet the persons who fill the six rooms of the palace belong to every class of society. Peasants, shopkeepers, and nobles, are all together in the room; and of the three orders, the moujiks are certainly the most numerous. They are wearing black and brown coats for this evening, but it is easy to see they will not wear them to-morrow, and that the sheepskin will be resumed before the next twelve hours have expired.

The most curious thing to observe at this entertainment was the effect of the Emperor's presence on his subjects, and the familiarity with which he treated them. At this national *fête* he wore a thoroughly national costume—that of the rifle militia of the crown peasants, formed during the last war. The uniform consists of a caftan of dark-green cloth, tied round the waist with a red sash; loose trousers, also of dark green; and long boots of pliable leather, coming halfway up the calf, and worn outside the trousers. The costume is not complete without a red shirt, of which the edge is alone visible above the collar of the caftan, and a Polish fur cap, somewhat similar to those worn by the Russian coachmen during winter. The dress is admirable, as well for ease and comfort as for picturesqueness, and in the eyes of the Russians it has the additional advantage of being thoroughly national. Hence this corps is one of the most popular in the army.

During the pauses between the never-ending promenades *à la Polonaise*, both the Emperor and the Empress spoke freely to the persons around them. I believe the Emperor Nicholas has been seen to take the arm of a peasant, and walk about the room with him. The Emperor Alexander

did not do this ; he simply spoke a few words of kindness and encouragement to those who happened to be in the vicinity of the card-tables by which he was standing. The individuals selected for this honour appeared (judging from the costume) to be in most cases natives of the more distant parts of the Russian Empire, and there can be no doubt that, however long their pilgrimage to the city of Moscow may have been, they must have felt more than compensated for any trouble or fatigue they may have undergone by so signal a mark of favour. All the people in the immediate neighbourhood of the Emperor were in a state of great excitement, and several of them actually shed tears after he had spoken to them.

And it must be remembered that this enthusiastic love of the people for their Emperor was manifested at a time when nothing was positively known of his intention to liberate the serfs. How would the peasants have received him if they had known of his project for their emancipation !

CHAPTER XIII.

KRILOFF AND THE RUSSIAN FABULISTS.

THERE are two monuments in the two capitals of Russia which, at first sight, puzzle and astonish the traveller from the West. We will suppose him to have arrived in Moscow by the Napoleonic route, through Warsaw and Smolensk. His first visit is, of course, to the Kremlin, outside which, in the middle of a large open space, he sees a group of statuary which represents Minin, of Nijni-Novgorod, calling upon Prince Pojarsky, the cattle-dealer, to head a band of patriots and lead them against the Poles, at that time (1612) in possession of Moscow. There were no Russian balls given in London in the year 1612 for the benefit of distressed Muscovites; but Russia was then in a very similar position, as regards Poland, to what Poland has since occupied with respect to Russia. This, in a vast majority of cases, is news to the traveller, who has in all probability been taught to look upon the partition of Poland as quite unjustifiable; whereas, whatever may be said of Austria and of Prussia, the originator of the scheme, it can be urged in defence of Russia that at the first division she simply settled a long-standing account with her ancient enemy, and re-annexed to her empire a territory which had belonged to her for centuries, until, during the Tartar occupation, it was wrested from her by the Poles, incited thereto by the Latin Church.

In due time the traveller goes northward to St. Petersburg, where, if he is properly directed, one of his first walks will be along the magnificent quays which imprison the frequently insurgent Neva. Ascending the left bank from St. Isaac's Place, he will pass the cathedral of St. Isaac, the statue of Peter, the Taurida Palace (a present from Catherine to Potemkin), the broad approach to the

interminable Nevsky Perspective, the wonderful monolith known as the Alexander Column, the Winter Palace, facing which are the Admiralty with its golden spire, and the gloomy-looking fortress of Peter and Paul, the Hermitage, which is connected with the Winter Palace by a second Bridge of Sighs, and after walking a few hundred yards (which, thanks to the interest of the objects that arrest his attention at every step, will have appeared no appreciable distance), will come to the Summer Garden. The Summer Garden—which during the greater part of the year is abundantly rich in winter produce, the trees being laden with icicles and the ground covered with a plentiful harvest of snow—is, in the season proper to it, the resort of all classes, but chiefly of little boys and girls, to whom it is what the garden of the Tuileries is to the nurseries of Paris, or Kensington Gardens to those of western London. The principal walks in the Summer Garden lead to one central spot, in which stands, or rather sits, a statue of a man who does not look much like a general, though of course soldiers are the only heroes that Russia cares to honour—a fact as well known as that intellectual superiority is systematically persecuted in that unhappy country. However, a great military commander would be represented either in uniform, or else as Mars without any uniform and wearing nothing but a helmet, like Souvaroff in the St. Petersburg Exercise Ground; or as Achilles, naked and defiant, like the Duke of Wellington in Hyde Park; whereas the hero of the Summer Garden is attired in a dressing-gown, like Béranger in the portraits prefixed to the ordinary editions of his works, and, like Béranger, is an old man, and has a stoop in the shoulders and a look of *bonhomie* mingled with sly humour in the face. It is Kriloff, the most popular author Russia has produced, of whose works ten years ago more than eighty thousand copies had been sold. There was some meaning in placing his statue in the Summer Garden, where the children of St. Petersburg

play and wander about for hours in the day, for there is not a child in Russia who is taught anything in the way of books, that does not learn Kriloff's "Fables." The fable-writer is sitting in an arm-chair, supported by an immense pedestal, on the sides of which are medallions representing the subjects of his most celebrated fables; and these designs, which they can at once understand, are as interesting to the children as the pictures in one of their favourite "picture-books." At a first glance, a person knowing nothing of Kriloff might imagine, from the bears, foxes, lions, wolves, and other animals by which he is surrounded, that he was some eminent natural historian. We have already mentioned a capital sarcasm suggested by the *entourage* of Kriloff's statue to a distinguished Russian sculptor, who had been intrusted with the execution of a monument to Nicholas.*

From what we have said about Kriloff's "Fables" being so much read by children, it must not be supposed that he was a writer of apologues adapted to the meanest capacity. Indeed, however much they may be amused by stories of foxes asking crows to sing, and of lambs defending themselves verbally against wolves, it is quite certain that children seldom understand the meaning of a fable, as is sufficiently shown by their notorious abhorrence of the "moral."

Kriloff is read by Russians of all ages and of all classes. On the occasion of his jubilee he had probably more honour paid to him by the authors and literary society of Russia than was ever offered to any writer in any country. At this celebration the Emperor Nicholas caused himself to be represented; and the object of so much attention was not a man who had flattered Russia or the Russians, but a satirist whose work, in the words of his compatriot, Nicholas Gogol, "contains severe lessons for every class in the empire, from the highest dignitary of State to the labourer of the lowest order."

* See page 101.

Every remarkable nation seems to have some peculiar form of literature, which may not be that in which it most excels, but which is eminently characteristic of its genius. For instance, it would be an insult to France to say that the literary qualities of that nation are chiefly manifested in its vaudevilles, but it is none the less true that the vaudeville is a species of play which the French have cultivated to perfection, and which only thrives on French soil. Similarly, it would be absurd to say of England that its literary glory is concentred in its great morning newspaper, though certainly no other country could bring out and support a journal like the "Times." In the same way we may say of Russia, not that its greatest writers are its fabulists, but that in these modern times the fable has flourished in Russia as it has flourished in no other country, and that several Russian authors have attained peculiar excellence in that style of composition.

As the fabulist of fabulists was a slave, and as Kriloff wrote under a very despotic government, it will probably strike many persons that the fabular form belongs essentially to a tyranny, and that it was adopted by the Russian writer as being the only one that would allow him to publish certain unpalatable truths, which if presented without the least disguise might have been pronounced objectionable by the censorship. This, however, will not account either for Kriloff, after his first success, confining himself, almost exclusively, to the composition of fables, nor for the great favour with which those fables were received. He would not, perhaps, in certain instances, have been read with so much avidity, but his literary reputation could scarcely have been less, if he had never produced a line that had reference to the evils of the Russian system of government.

Another thing which would seem to show that the fable in Russia may be regarded as, in some measure, a product of despotism, is the success achieved in that

country by certain pieces of what may be called *practical satire*—a much milder form of protest than the mildest apologue, because it does not necessarily mean anything at all.

Let us explain. A student makes a lamp-shade out of the portrait of the Emperor Nicholas. An Englishman or Frenchman visiting this student for the first time sees merely the Emperor Nicholas's portrait on a lamp-shade, but a Russian entering the room understands that the young man regards Nicholas as an obstacle to enlightenment.

At dessert a diner-out, tired of telling anecdotes, takes a quantity of nuts, and covers the bottom of his plate with them. On this broad foundation he places a smaller quantity of nuts; above that another layer smaller again, and so on, until he has built a pyramid, of which one solitary nut forms the summit. He then points out to the company that he has constructed the material similitude of the Russian Table of Ranks, or "Tchinns," with the Emperor above and the people beneath. The guests look, and probably do not admire, but the exhibitor has not yet finished. He shakes his plate, the nuts are all mixed together, and it is now impossible not to observe how much one nut is like another, and that those which occupied the highest positions cannot be distinguished from those which were at the bottom.

By a similar kind of device, Poushkin is said* to have exemplified the proportion of Russian blood flowing in the veins of the reigning family. For Russian blood he took wine; for German, water; and showed how, through the continual addition of water, the presence of the wine was now scarcely recognizable in the mixture. Such a test of nationality (for the rest most imperfect) is, of course, one that no reigning family in Europe could stand; but the

* By M. Golovin, by M. Prosper Mérimée (who perhaps borrows the anecdote from M. Golovin), and afterwards by a number of other writers.

illustration, like that of the nuts, is, as far as it goes, ingenious and striking; and this, together with the impossibility of expressing anything of the kind in so many plain words, appears to have gained for both these "pleasantries in action" a very extended celebrity. But the fact is, the Russians are, and have always been, fond of quaint illustrations, of humorous allegories, and of such condensations of popular wisdom as are found in the picturesque proverbs of their country; and, appreciating jokes, we can understand that they must, now and then, enjoy a quiet joke against their rulers, especially when we remember that it is with such weapons that they can attack them most successfully. But, provided they publish nothing that tends to bring the Emperor himself into disrespect, there is not, nor was there during the last reign, any reason why an author, wishing to expose the vices of the Russian administration, should do so only through the medium of fables. M. Cyprien Robert, Professor of Slavonian Literature at the College of France, says, with truth, that "on this subject the utmost latitude is allowed to popular criticisms; provided the person of the Czar is spared, everything else is permitted. What Gogol has written about the Muscovite administration could not have been printed in any German State."*

We consider, then, that in writing fables Kriloff simply followed the bent of his own natural genius, which was eminently Russian; but he, at the same time, took advantage of his favourite literary form to attack the vices of Russian ministers and officials, and sometimes even to give a hint to the Emperor himself. In Griboiedoff's comedy of "Gore ot Ouma," one of the principal personages enters "with a piece of good news," which is to the effect that "in all lyceums, schools, and gymnasiums, nothing save military exercises is to be taught, and that books are to be reserved for grand occasions." "If we mean to strike the evil at its root," says another, "we

* "Les Slaves;" par Cyprien Robert.

must throw all the books into the fire." "Not at all," continues a third; "there are different kinds of books, but if I were censor, I should certainly be inexorable in regard to fables. I should dread them like the Evil One. They are full of jests about lions and eagles. Say what you will, these are animals, but also they are Czars."

Doubtless, Kriloff is the writer whose fables this official is represented as having "dreaded like the Evil One." Doubtless, too, it is, in part, Kriloff's liberal tone that makes the author of "Revelations of Russia" speak of him in that work as "perhaps the first fabulist of any age or country, and, at all events, by far the most shining light of Russian literature;" but it nevertheless appears certain to us that if Russia had been as free a country as England, Kriloff would still have written those of his fables which do most honour to his name.

We have said that the Russians have naturally a great liking for fables; and, before Kriloff published a line, three Russian authors had already gained a high reputation as fable-writers. Of these, one was Soumarokoff, a poet of Catherine's time, chiefly known by his tragedies, the two others being Dmitrieff and Khemnitzer, Kriloff's contemporaries, but predecessors in literature. Dmitrieff was for many years Minister of Justice, and before his death, with characteristic good sense, published a final edition of his works, "corrected and *diminished*." It is interesting to know that Kriloff's earliest fables were submitted to Dmitrieff, who at once recognized their merit, and encouraged his competitor to pursue a path in which he soon eclipsed the glory of all his forerunners.

Khemnitzer commenced life as a surgeon, but, disliking that sanguinary profession, went into the army, and served in a campaign against the Turks. "This, however," he said, "was going out of the rain into the river." Afterwards he left the military service, and was appointed Consul at Smyrna. One of Khemnitzer's fables appears to us so strikingly Russian in tone, and is, moreover, so amus-

ing, that we subjoin a translation of it, after which we shall confine our attention exclusively to Kriloff. The original, like all modern Russian fables, is in verse ;but we shall not attempt to give a poetical version of it.

"METAPHYSICS.

"A father had heard that children were sometimes sent beyond the sea to be educated, and that he who had been beyond the sea could be at once distinguished from him who had not.

"So, not to be behind others, the father decided to send his son across the ocean, that he might learn something useful ; but the boy returned a greater dunce than before. He had fallen into scholastic hands, had had inexplicable things explained to him, but had learned nothing, and remained a fool.

"Formerly in his simplicity the boy would talk of simple subjects, but now of the loftiest things and quite unreasonably. The dull did not understand him before, but now even the clever could make nothing of him, and his family, the town, and the whole world grew weary of his nonsensical talk.

"Mad from metaphysical study, pondering on the old subject, seeking the beginning of all beginnings, he was ascending into the clouds, when, as he proceeded along the road, he stumbled and fell into a pit.

"His father, who happened to be with him, ran to fetch a rope, with which to rescue Wisdom from the abyss and bring him up into the world again.

"In the meanwhile the clever youth sat in the pit, and reflected what could be the reason of his stumbling and falling into it. 'The cause was probably an earthquake, and my rapid fall into the pit may be accounted for by central attraction and the pressure of the air.'

"The father came back with the rope. 'Here,' he said, 'is a rope for you ; take hold of it and I will pull you out. Hold fast!'

"'No, do not pull yet; tell me first——' and the student began to rave as usual—'what manner of thing is a rope?'

"The father was not a learned man, but he possessed common sense; and without regarding the scientific side of the question, replied: 'A rope is a thing for pulling out people who have fallen into a pit.'

"'For such a purpose some other instrument should be invented,' said the learned youth, continuing his own mode of talking; 'and so this is a rope?'

"'Time is necessary for what you propose,' replied the father, 'and it is lucky we have the rope here at hand.'

"'And what is time?' recommenced the son.

"'Ah! time is a thing I shall not lose with a fool; remain where you are,' said the father, 'till I come again.'

"What if we were to collect all the utterers of absurdities and untruths, and throw them into a pit to keep company with this youth? But we should want a large pit!"

Let us now speak of Kriloff's writings and life, of which all that is interesting in the latter is closely connected with his career as a fabulist. Ivan Andreievitch Kriloff was born in Moscow, February 2nd, 1768. His father was a captain in the army, and during the insurrection of Pougatcheff was intrusted with the defence of Orenburg, where not only the captain himself, but also little Kriloff and his mother, were in considerable danger, for the Pretender swore that when he took the city he would put the commandant and all his family to death. Pougatcheff, however, was himself captured, and Captain Kriloff afterwards left the military for the civil service, and was made president of the magistracy at Tver, where he died when his son was only eleven years of age. Young Kriloff received all his early education from his mother, except such literary knowledge as he managed to acquire by reading

very assiduously the books left by his father. He appears, when only fourteen years old, to have written a comic opera, of which the best his biographers can say is, that fortunately it was never published. What convinces us, however, that even at this early age the boy possessed considerable talent, is the fact that he sold his operetta to a publisher for sixty roubles. The bookseller who made so daring an investment was also a composer, and probably intended to set young Kriloff's libretto to music. Nothing, however, came of it, except that the youthful author received his sixty roubles, or rather, by his own wish, sixty roubles' worth of books which he chose himself from the publisher's shop, selecting among other works those of Molière, Racine, and Boileau. Probably it was the study of Racine that created in him a temporary taste for tragedy, which, however, led to no good result.

Kriloff had already entered the Government service. He remained in it until he was twenty-five, when he resigned his post, and for twelve years afterwards lived by contributing to various journals and magazines, occupying himself, at the same time, with the direction of a printing-office. One of his first enterprises in literature was a satirical journal, entitled "The Ghosts," in which, even then, the love of the Russians for everything foreign, and their constant use of French words in ordinary conversation, appear to have been favourite subjects of raillery. It was not until he was thirty-eight years of age that Kriloff wrote anything that gave promise of his future greatness; but, in the meanwhile, he had seen much of the world, had read a great many French and German works, had learned Italian, and had even taught himself the violin, on which instrument he is said to have played as well as the best *virtuosi* of the day. This last accomplishment cannot, it is true, have aided Kriloff much in the composition of his fables; but it is interesting to know that he had the temperament and tastes of a musician, which, for the rest, might be guessed, not from the melody of his verse, which

does not necessarily imply that the poet can tell one tune from another, but from certain subjects that he has treated, and from his mode of treating them.

After passing several years with Prince Serge Galitzin, Governor of Riga, first as secretary, and afterwards, when the Prince had left the service, as tutor to his children, Kriloff went, in 1806, to Moscow, where he became acquainted with Dmitrieff, then at the height of his reputation. Kriloff translated, or rather imitated, La Fontaine's *Le Chêne et le Roseau* and *La Fille difficile dans le choix d'un Mari*, and showed them to the celebrated fable-writer, who, as we have already mentioned, encouraged his future rival, and assured him that he had at length discovered the style especially suited to his talent. From this time, with the exception of a brief return to his *premiers amours* in the following year, when he wrote another piece for the stage, Kriloff gave himself up entirely to the composition of fables, and, in 1808, published his first collection, which, though it included only twenty-three specimens, at once made him famous. We need hardly say that after his first essays he no longer confined himself to imitations of La Fontaine, in which, as it appears to us, he is never so happy as in his own original compositions.

In reading these eternal reproductions of Æsop, it is curious to observe how each successive fabulist, unable to rival the terseness and plainness of the old Phrygian, has sought to improve upon him by adding new details to his simple, natural legends. Take the "Wolf and the Lamb," for instance, which, in Æsop, is told in a few lines. It is longer in Phædrus, longer still in La Fontaine, and longest of all in Kriloff. And though Kriloff's "Wolf and the Lamb" is very interesting, and contains some ingenious points, which are not to be found in the same fable as treated by his predecessors, it is not so good as La Fontaine's, which is not so good as that of Phædrus, which, finally, is not so good as that of Æsop. In the Latin, the

French, and the Russian version, the Greek fable still appears as the essence. In all four, the wolf complains that the lamb is troubling the stream; in all, the lamb replies that he is drinking below the wolf; in all, the wolf rejoins, that the lamb, "his father and mother, and all his hateful race, are industriously opposed to him;" and in all, the wolf ends by devouring the lamb. Nothing can be added to the above, which is the substance of Æsop's fable, without appearing superfluous to all except those who consider, like the devoted admirers of La Fontaine, that the great merit of a fable lies in the style. Phædrus makes the wolf attack the lamb's family one by one. "Six months ago you spoke ill of me." "Six months ago I was not born." "Your father spoke ill of me," &c., all of which is amusing, but in no way increases the philosophic value of the fable. La Fontaine, as we have observed, again adds to the story, and Kriloff introduces, not only the lamb's relatives, but his shepherd, and the dogs of the flock, and makes the wolf, by way of conclusion, say cynically to his young friend, "If you have no other failing, you are in fault in so far that I am very hungry, and wish to eat you."

However, out of upwards of two hundred fables composed by him, Kriloff has not borrowed the subject of more than thirty, which, in the index to his book, are distinguished from the rest by means of asterisks affixed to the titles. And yet, because the groundwork (and in some cases the general form) of these thirty appears to have been taken from La Fontaine, M. Bougeault,* and every French writer who mentions Kriloff, calls him the Russian La Fontaine, whereas, if he is to be compared to any one, he is a Russian Æsop—the difference between Æsop and La Fontaine being, of course, that the former was a great inventor, whereas the latter invented nothing but some of the details, and occasionally the structure of

* Author of *Kriloff, ou le La Fontaine Russe; sa vie et ses Fables.* Garnier frères, Paris.

his fables. M. Bougeault reminds us, with much *naïveté*, that M. Viennet also finds his own subjects, and asks whether he is, for that reason, to be set above La Fontaine. But this is like comparing the invention of a perambulator to that of the steam-engine. We are quite ready to admit that neither M. Viennet, nor any one else, for that matter, could, out of the Horatian story of the "Town Mouse and the Country Mouse," have composed such a charming fable as La Fontaine's *Le Rat de Ville et le Rat de Campagne;* but we are still more certain that neither M. Viennet nor La Fontaine himself could have written one of the best fables of Kriloff. The French call their La Fontaine the fable-tree—*le fablier*—which, however, would be a finer compliment if the fruit he bore had been his own. They argue as if the subject of a fable were nothing; we maintain that it is everything, and that a good fable may be told in verse, in prose, in five lines or in twenty, and that, as long as the subject is fairly presented, it will produce its effect. Did Æsop or La Fontaine write the "Fox and the Grapes"? And however that may be, why will not the French understand the moral of that fable, and cease to undervalue a great original fable-writer because the country of La Fontaine has been unable to produce one?

The French (with the exception of M. Bougeault, who, though he ranks Kriloff a little lower than La Fontaine, has published, in the book previously alluded to, some excellent translations of the fables) have indeed treated the Russian author very badly. In 1825, Count Orloff, wishing to spread the fame of his illustrious countryman throughout Europe, engaged a number of the most celebrated authors of France (not very rich in authors just then), and of Italy, to translate a hundred of Kriloff's fables into French and Italian verse. A volume was printed, in which each of the hundred fables was given, first in Russian, then in French, and then in Italian. The book was adorned with a portrait of Kriloff, and

enriched by an introduction from the pen of M. Lemontey, of the Institute. The experiment was a curious one, and, as might have been foreseen, was attended with no success.

The work was performed in this manner:—First, Count Orloff prepared a literal version in French of the fables he wished to have versified; then the eminent writers took the Count's prose, put it into rhyme, and in so doing altered whatever they thought fit!* One author went so far as to invent a moral of his own, which happened to be quite at variance with the meaning of the fable intrusted to his poetical guardianship. In the original, a groping, inquiring man, intended to typify the critic who, no matter in what sphere, has an eye only for the smallest details, has been to a museum of natural history, and comes back with an interminable account of the flies and beetles stuck on pins, and of all the entomological riches of the place. "And what did you think of the elephant?" his friend asks. The curious, minute observer goes on to describe the number of moths he has seen. "But that magnificent elephant?" repeats the friend. "To tell the truth," replies the "Inquiring Man" (which is the title of the fable), "the elephant, somehow or other, escaped my notice." The Russian fable has no "moral," and in supplying this apparent omission, the French writer has boldly taken the part of the "Inquiring Man," and has recorded his opinion that the vulgar alone admire what is great; and that the "true sage" takes eternal pleasure in the contemplation of minute perfection! M. Lemontey's introduction to the Orloff edition of Kriloff, of which the chief materials appear to have been supplied by the Count himself, is very interesting. The author explains the backwardness of Russia in civilization by the perpetual invasions, first of Tartars, and afterwards of Poles, from which the Muscovites suffered

* Count Orloff was similarly assisted in the composition of his *Histoire de l'Opéra in Italie.*

from the thirteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century; gives some account of the Russian language, and especially of its vast poetic resources; pays a compliment to Count Orloff, and sounds the praises of his collaborateurs, in the style of the Empire. The work has been executed "*par de graves écrivains;*" among whom he mentions the Count de Ségur, "*Auteur d'une Histoire Universelle;*" Parseval-Grandmaison, "*Le Chantre de Philippe Auguste;*" Boissy d'Anglas, *Le "Plutarque de Malesherbes,"* and so on. The most *likely* of the contributors were such men as Dumersan, Picard, and Duval, the comic dramatists; but all, in their "imitations," have gone far away from the originals, generally spinning them out to a most enfeebling length, and never troubling themselves in the least to follow the Russian author. Kriloff is never declamatory or emphatic, never says a word too much, and in his morals, especially, has the true brevity which belongs to wit. The French authors, however, have in some instances, as we have seen, tagged morals to his fables when they were not wanted (thus spoiling the entire design), and in others have extended a moral of two lines into a sermon of twenty. Let us show the reader, for instance, how Rouget de Lisle, one of the most conscientious of the French "adapters" engaged by Count Orloff, treated Kriloff's fable of "The Geese."

The geese are being driven to market rather hastily, for their master is late; and the fabulist explains that in certain cases neither geese nor men can be spared. A traveller is walking along the same road, and to him the flock complain, as follows:—

"'The low-born fellow little knows,
When driving birds like us with blows,
That we descend from those great geese
Who once were praised in classic tome,
And will be praised till time shall cease,
As saviours of Imperial Rome.'

"'Well, what of that? We all have heard the story;
Your ancestors saved Rome; to them the glory.
But what have you done?' quoth the curious stranger.
'Why, when the Roman city was in danger,
Our ancestors——'
'I know;
But show
What good yourselves have done?'
'Oh, none!'

"'Then leave your ancestors alone,
Nor claim a glory not your own.
They saved, 't is true, their native land,
But you, O vain inglorious band,
Are only fit
For the roasting spit!'

"My fable 's done; I could explain the text;
But no; our little goslings might be vexed."

Instead of this moral, of which the form is very novel, and which is, of course, much better in the original than in our translation, M. Rouget de Lisle gives us five long lines,* forgetting that the Russian author has only supplied point for two. From this specimen, one of the least unfavourable that could be selected, the reader may judge how Kriloff fared at the hands of the other distinguished French writers who undertook to present him to their compatriots.

That we may not have to return to this particular branch of our subject, we will here give a few more examples of the happy manner in which Kriloff frequently

* "Si je voulais mater les insolentes joies
De tant d'oisons sans palme, aux airs pleins de hauteur,
Quel texte à commenter! Chut! indiscret censeur,
Le temps présent est l'arche du Seigneur:
Ne faisons pas crier les oies."

introduces his morals. In a fable entitled "The Two Boys," a couple of youths are lamenting the impossibility of getting at some nuts with which a tree close to them is laden, the boughs of which are quite beyond their reach. One suggests to the other that he shall climb on his shoulders for the benefit of both, and in this way contrives to obtain an excellent position in the middle of the tree. The fortunate youth then begins to eat the nuts, but he only throws the shells to his companion. "Alas!" says Kriloff—

"Alas! my memory tells
Of men thus raised to place,
Who 've not e'en had the grace
To throw their friends the shells!"

In "The Swan, the Crab, and the Pike," we find that unsuitable trio agreeing to draw a load, but when the time for drawing it arrives, the swan flies into the air, the crab walks backwards, and the pike goes into the sea. Thereupon the fabulist remarks:

"Which was right and which was wrong,
I really can't pretend to say;
But this I know, they laboured long,
And the load stands still to the present day."*

The "Ass and the Nightingale" shows us the thick-skinned animal giving himself airs of connoisseurship, and asking the sweetest singer of the woods to favour him with a song. He listens. All Nature is enchanted with the warbling of the bird; but the jackass shakes his head. "Not a bad voice," he observes, "but you should take a few lessons from the village cock." Here is the moral—

"What most the poet fears
Is the critic with long ears."

* It was imagined by the Russians, at the beginning of the Crimean war, that the English, the French, and the Turks would pull together like the pike, the crab, and the swan. Hence several caricatures suggested by Kriloff's fable. See page 48.

A gentleman asks a friend to dine at his house, and, after the manner of the old Russian proprietors, entertains him with a concert. The guest does not think much of the music, and says so. The host takes the part of his musicians, and defends them in the following fashion :—

"As instrumentalists they 're bad, but then
Remember what these players are as men ;
They cannot fiddle, but they have this merit—
They never touch a drop of wine or spirit."

"But," says the moralist, in a couplet which has since become a proverb, and which, in our humble opinion, is an excellent one—

"But I say drink, if drinking be your mood,
And when you 're working, let your work be good!"

Henceforward we shall not attempt to reproduce even a fragment of these fables in verse, but will translate some literally into prose, and will give a sufficient account of others, which, apart from all appropriateness and elegance of style, are interesting either from their applicability to persons and things in Russia, or from their general philosophic merit. To begin, every one knows that the great curse of Russia is the tyranny of the officials, who are, of course, theoretically speaking, amenable to the law, but against whose persecutions, practically, a poor man without influence can do nothing. The officials, then, are the wolves in the following fable of

THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP.

"The wolves led the sheep such a life that at last they could scarcely exist, and it was absolutely necessary that the government should interfere to save them. To this end a council was held. It is true the greater number of those present were wolves, but it is not every wolf that has a bad name; and there have been instances, which must not be forgotten, of wolves, when they were satisfied,

walking quite peaceably past a flock. Why, then, should not wolves be admitted into the council? for though we must protect the sheep, still we must not be unjust to the wolves. Accordingly, a council was formed in the thickest part of the wood, where the members deliberated, debated, heard evidence, and at last made a law, which was, word for word, as follows:—'As soon as a wolf is found troublesome in the neighbourhood of a flock, and begins to annoy the sheep, then any sheep, without distinction of rank, has a right to take the wolf by the neck, and drag him instantly before the bar of the council. And nothing in this law shall be added or taken away.'"

"But though it is said that wolves are liable to punishment," is the fabulist's conclusion, "I find that, let the sheep be accusers or accused, the wolves still devour them."

The frequent collusion between officials when one is the accused and the other the judge, is illustrated in a fable called "The Pike." The pike has been plundering the pond in which he lives. The little fishes have abundance of proofs, and the culprit is taken before the tribunal in a manner suitable to his dignity, that is to say, in a large basin of water. There was no need to go far for the judges; they lived close by, and grazed on the banks of the pond. There were two asses, two or three goats, and, to aid them, a skilled jurisconsult, a most experienced fox, was joined to their number. People said that the fox's table was never without fish; indeed, the pike gave him as much as he wanted, charitable soul! However, it seemed impossible to shake the impartiality of the judges, for this time the guilt of the pike was beyond all doubt. It was resolved to inflict a terrible punishment, and, that other villains might be deterred from like offences, he was sentenced to be hanged. "Oh," said the fox, "hanging is too good for him. I call upon you, venerable tribunal, to visit his crime with a punishment even more severe. Let

us drown him!" "The fox is right!" cried the judges in chorus, and thereupon the thief was taken and thrown into the river.

"The Fox and the Marmot" is a lesson for bribe-takers. "Whither are you running," says the latter to the former, "without daring to look on either side of you?" "Calumny, calumny!" replies the fox; "I have been driven out as a rogue, but *you* know whether I rendered justice or not in that poultry-yard. There was nothing to gain there; it was a most ungrateful office. I had no sleep at night, by day I had scarcely time to eat a mouthful; my health was even suffering by it; and after all, through hatred and calumny, I am disgraced. Call *me* a thief indeed! I only ask you whether I can be justly accused of the slightest act of dishonesty?" "Certainly not, my dear friend," is the reply, "but I must say to my regret that I have sometimes seen down sticking to your muzzle."

"More than one functionary," says Kriloff in the moral, "complains of his poverty, and declares that neither he nor his wife ever received presents. Nevertheless, in time he builds a villa, and buys an estate. How does he balance his disbursements and receipts? If you wanted to prove before a judge that he had taken bribes, you would find it very difficult; yet every one must acknowledge that the down is quite visible round the gentleman's mouth."

The dull, stupid rogue of an official who steals very quietly on a small scale is shown to us in the fable of "The Ass." The animal in question robs the garden at his leisure, until his master, attaching some importance to the beast, and fearing to lose him, fastens a bell to his neck. The ass is delighted at receiving this "decoration," and fancies himself a very important personage, but unfortunately for him, he can now no longer indulge his felonious tastes without the knowledge of his master, and he gets so many blows and so little food, that he is soon

reduced to a skeleton. According to the Russian fabulist, a good many official rogues are caught in this manner. In obscure positions they can rob to their heart's content. But let the bell of rank be attached to them, and the chances are they will be found out. We presume, however, that this applies only to such officials as are fairly typified by the Ass.

The comedy writer quoted at the beginning of this article has told us that in fables "Lions and Eagles" in reality mean Czars. According to this dictum, Kriloff's fable of the young lion who receives his education from the eagle ought to have some reference to the instruction of princes, and would mean that what is very useful knowledge for the son of one king may for another of a different country be without utility. At all events, Kriloff thought that the very best education for a Russian who was destined to play an important part in the government of his country was not that which he would receive even from the most enlightened and lofty-minded personage in a foreign land. The lion, determined to qualify his son for the throne he will one day have to fill, and "that the people may not blame the father for the faults of his son," thinks how he can best instruct the heir in kingly duties. Shall he send him to the fox? No; the fox is clever, but fond of deceit, which is not becoming in a king. Shall he give him to the mole? There has been a great talk about the mole's love of order, of his prudence in never taking a step without groping, of his economy and foresight in preparing grain for his own table; in a word, the mole is a great animal for trifles, but unfortunately he can only see just beyond his nose. "The mole's order," reflects his majesty, "is good enough for him, but a lion's kingdom is larger than a mole's burrow." Shall he take a panther as his son's preceptor? The panther is courageous, strong, and moreover is a great tactician; but then he understands nothing of the rights of citizens, and what lessons in government could he give to a king who

should be at once a judge, a minister, and a warrior? No; the panther knows only how to fight, and is not fit to give instruction to a royal child.

In short, none of the animals, not even the elephant, "who is honoured in the forests as Plato in Greece," appeared to the lion worthy to educate his son. At last another king, the king of the feathered tribe, who had a great friendship for the lion, and had heard of his majesty's difficulty, offered himself to educate the heir. The lion was delighted, and without delay sent his son to the eagle. The heir had some natural ability, and made such progress under the eagle's tuition, that soon all the birds of the wood were full of his praise.

When, after many years, the young lion came back to his father, the latter assembled all his subjects, and said to his son, "My beloved, you are my only heir; my eyes are turned towards the grave, but you are just entering the world, and I willingly give up to you my entire kingdom; but tell me first what you have learnt, and how you intend to make your people happy."

"Papa," exclaims the son, "I know what no one here knows. From the eagle to the quail, I can tell where each bird most increases, on what it subsists, what eggs it has, and all the necessities of its life; and here is a certificate from my master to prove it. And now, as you propose to leave the government to me, I will at once begin and teach the beasts how to build nests."

The fable of the "Two Razors," though of general applicability, is understood to have had special reference to the Emperor Nicholas's selection of his ministers. A man at an inn is seen attempting to shave with a blunt razor, and hacking his face terribly in the operation. It is suggested to him that he should throw away the blunt razor and try instead a sharp one of the finest steel; but he declines the advice, saying that he is afraid of cutting himself. "Some persons," says the moral, "are afraid of able men, and patiently make use of fools."

Another of Kriloff's fables, which was addressed so evidently to the Emperor that it never was published, was written as if to illustrate Nicholas's treatment of Yermoloff. This general was probably the most popular commander Russia had had since Souvaroff, and he was so much loved by the army of the Caucasus, that, according to general report, the Emperor was jealous of his influence with the troops, and in spite of his important services recalled him, and placed him *en retraite*. This suggested to Kriloff a fable, in which the owner of a high-spirited horse, whose greatest delight is to serve his master and carry him bounding over the plains, is represented as shutting up his steed in the stable and leaving him to pine away in inactivity. The Emperor Nicholas is said to have read the fable, which was circulated in manuscript (as, indeed, were many of Kriloff's fables before they were printed), and to have sent for the author and remonstrated with him on having produced it. This is, of course, one of those stories of which the veracity cannot be guaranteed, and which, as the newspapers say, "we publish as it has reached us;" but it is quite certain that the fable in question is well known in Russia, and that the anecdote, as we have given it, finds general credence. We must add that the Emperor Nicholas, who has been accused of various acts of meanness which he never committed, seems to have borne no ill will to Kriloff for having written it; indeed, from first to last, his kindness to this illustrious and truly patriotic man was unvarying.

When the court itself received a hint occasionally, the courtier, a personage who has always been a favourite mark for satirists, was of course not to be spared. There is nothing, however, very severe, though there is a great deal that is true, in the fable—one of the best of the kind—of the squirrel who takes service at the court of the lion. The lion has promised the squirrel a cartload

of nuts, for the sake of which the latter ceases to play with his companions, and, whether gay or sad, waits upon his majesty every day with a smiling face. Sometimes he thinks of the joyous life led by the other squirrels, and determines to join them for a time; but no sooner has he made this resolution than some important duty calls him to the palace. At last he grows old, his majesty gets tired of him, and without much ceremony tells him to withdraw from the court. The rejected one, at the same time, receives the munificent donation that had been promised to him, a whole cartload of nuts of the finest quality. Indeed, it would have been difficult to find such nuts elsewhere, and the only pity is that the squirrel, having now lost all his teeth, cannot crack them!

Kriloff has written so many excellent fables of general interest that we scarcely know which to speak of, and which to pass over. One of the most popular is that of "The Cat and the Cook," in the conception of which we see the vigorous shrewdness of the Russian mind reflected quite as strikingly as in the "Metaphysics" of Khemnitzer, and in a more artistic allegorical form. The cook was a great rhetorician, and was fond of preaching to the cat, whom, on one occasion, finding it necessary to visit the neighbouring tavern, he left in charge of the kitchen, enjoining him with much eloquence to preserve the eatables from the mice. On his return the cook, to his horror and amazement, found "Vaska" devouring a roast chicken, while by his side lay the evidence of previous guilt in the shape of an empty pie-crust. "Oh, you wretch, you glutton!" exclaims the cook; "are you not ashamed that the very walls should see you, to say nothing of men?" Vaska continues to eat the chicken. "Why, until now you were reputed an honest cat, you were even held up as a pattern of virtue; and at present, oh dear, what a disgrace! the neighbours will say, 'That cat Vaska is a rogue; that cat Vaska is a thief; he is not fit to come

into the kitchen, nor even into the yard; he is like a hungry wolf near a sheepfold, and is the pest and the poison of the place.'"

Vaska hears and eats.

"The orator," says Kriloff, "gave full flow to his words, and there would apparently have been no end to his moralizing, when suddenly he perceived that while he had been talking the cat had finished the chicken." We can fancy the Emperor Nicholas enjoying this fable and saying to himself that the moral, as follows, might have been profitably studied by Louis Philippe:—"I give this piece of advice to other cooks, and would have them inscribe it on the kitchen wall: 'not to waste words when force should be employed.'"

Another favourite fable of Kriloff's is the one known as "The Quartet." The ape, the ass, the goat, and the bear, form a quartet society. They have all they can possibly want; a violoncello, an alto, a couple of violins, and plenty of music. They go out into the meadow and sit under the lime-trees to charm the world with their art. They strike, they tear at the strings, but no harmony comes of it. "Stop, stop!" cries the ape; "how can we play quartets thus? we are not properly seated. You, my dear bear with the bass, must sit facing the alto, and I will take up my position opposite the second violin; all will then be admirable, and the woods and hills will dance to our music." They arrange themselves accordingly, and recommence the quartet; but still it goes wrong. "Wait a moment, I have discovered the secret," says the ass; "we shall go well together if we sit in a row." The advice of the ass is followed, and the musicians sit in a straight line; but still they have no success. Then there are fresh disputes, and they are quarrelling as to how they ought to sit, when a nightingale, alarmed at the noise, flies towards them, and is at once requested to decide their doubts. "We have instruments, music-books, and every-

thing," they say, "and only wish to know how we should sit."

"To be a musician," replies the nightingale, "one must have other ears than yours; without knowledge or taste, you may sit as you please, you will make no music."

Every fable-writer has moralized on man's weakness for gold, and some of Kriloff's fables on the monetary question are exceedingly happy. In one of these, Fortune appears to a beggar, and offers him as much gold as his bag will hold, warning him at the same time that, if any of it touches the ground, it will instantly turn to dust. The poor man holds the bag, into which Fortune showers gold until at last it is full to the mouth. "One piece more," says the beggar, and Fortune, cautioning him at the same time that the bag may burst, puts in another coin. "Still another piece," cries the beggar; and Fortune, telling him to beware, thrusts piece after piece into the bag, until at last it bursts, and all is dust.

"In Fortune on a Visit," the goddess gives one of her favourites a magic purse, which possesses this admirable property, that as long as he continues to put his hand into it he draws out money, but let him once pause from his agreeable labour, and the purse is dry. The man has soon a heap of gold by his side, but neither hunger nor fatigue can make him desist from his lucrative occupation, and at last he dies of exhaustion by the side of his treasure.

"The Sack" is a fable for *parvenus*. An old bag has been lying in an ante-chamber used from time to time for any dirty work the servants might have on hand, such, for instance, as wiping the mud from their boots. Suddenly the master of the house has need of it, and it is filled with ducats. The sack is now no longer kicked about, but stands erect in a room, to which not every one is admitted; and it is becomingly boastful of its height, its bulk, and the marked attention with which it is treated. How it despises other sacks, empty or less richly filled,

and remarks that this one is no good, that that will decidedly come to a bad end, and so on! But, at last, the proud sack is deprived of its ducats, and it is then once more a worthless rag, and is thrown into the dust-hole, to be thought of no more.

"The Shadow and the Man," of all Kriloff's fables, is the most fanciful and poetical, and it seems to us that it scarcely needed a moral. An idler tries to catch his own shadow. As he runs, so it runs, as though it were a treasure seeking to avoid his grasp. The man turns back, looks round, and sees that his shadow is following him.

"Beauties!" exclaims the fabulist;—"but no," he adds, "this does not apply to you. But as regards fortune, does not one man waste time and trouble in striving to overtake it, while another seems to be avoiding it, when Fortune herself runs after him?"

"Miron" is the fable of a man who wishes to have a reputation for charity, and is at the same time unwilling to give. It is not an uncommon thing for rich Russian merchants on stated days, and especially on festivals, to distribute money to the poor, who, on these occasions, fill the court-yard of the house. Miron is a millionnaire, of whom it is said that he never gives a copeik to the poor; for the sake, therefore, of his good name, he announces that he will feed beggars every Saturday. Crowds flock to his gates, which are left wide open to receive the alms-seekers; and every one says, that if this goes on Miron will be eaten out of house and home. But no; for every Saturday Miron lets loose in his yard a savage mastiff, and the beggars have not only to eat and satisfy themselves, but also to get away from the place without being bitten. In the meanwhile, Miron is accounted a saint. "It is impossible to admire his generosity too much," says the world; "but it is a pity he keeps such savage dogs: it is somewhat difficult to approach him, but he is ready to divide all he has with the poor."

"I have often observed," adds Kriloff, "that the palaces of the great are not easy of access; but it is always the fault of the dogs: the Mirons, themselves, are of course in no way to blame."

Sometimes the fable-writer speaks despondingly of the race of place-hunters and parasites who are the plague of the Russian people, as though it were inexterminable, and belonged naturally to the institutions of the country. A prince talking to a philosopher asks him to explain, if possible, how it happens that he cannot establish a court of justice, or a learned society, without the meanest persons, before he has time to look round, finding their way into it. "Is there no remedy for this?" he inquires. "I am afraid not," replies the sage; "between ourselves, it is like our wooden houses. I finished mine only seven days since; the owner has not yet taken possession, but the cockroaches were there long ago."

This last fable, like that of Miron, has, perhaps, more a national than a general character. "Trishka's Caftan," and "Dimian's Fish Soup," are also national in colour, but are of universal application. The former is a Russian version of the story of the Irishman's blanket. Trishka cuts off the skirt of his caftan to mend the sleeves. "Dimian's Fish Soup" is the history of an over-hospitable gentleman, who, with many entreaties, and with loud praises of his cook, urges the said Dimian to swallow dish after dish of his really excellent fish-soup, until at last the unfortunate guest takes up his girdle and his cap, and runs in despair from the house. This fable is said to have been read for the first time under very appropriate circumstances. Kriloff had been invited to a meeting of authors, at the house of the poet Derjavin, where it was understood that several literary productions would be read for the first time. Kriloff had promised to bring a new fable, and, according to his wont, arrived late. It so happened that one of the party, who, we have no doubt, came very early, was reading an interminable paper, which

long since had made every one present yawn. When Kriloff came in, every one was anxious to hear the new fable, but he insisted on the gentleman who had the ear of the assembly continuing to read his essay. Indeed, it would have been difficult to stop him; he forced it upon the company. At last the seemingly endless composition came to an end, but not until every one was tired to death. Then Kriloff produced his long-expected fable, which is a model of terseness, and of which the moral is as follows:—"You are happy, oh writer, if you have a gift from heaven; but if you do not know how to be silent in time, and will not spare the ears of your neighbour, then understand that your prose and verse will be more nauseating even than Dimian's fish-soup."

Some of Kriloff's fables are simply interesting little narratives, fables in the strict, but not in the generally-received, sense of the word. Such, for instance, is that of "The Trigamist," which, if it can be said to have any moral at all, teaches no more than this—that folly persisted in generally meets with its own reward. A man is convicted of having married three wives. What is to be done to him? There is a punishment for bigamy, but for such an offence as trigamy the law makes no provision. The judge simply decides that the man shall live in the same house with his three wives. "That was no punishment at all," says an imaginary reader. "Was it not?" answers the fabulist: "in less than a week the man hanged himself." "The Libel," too, is little more than an amusing story, and it is so humorous in itself that one almost forgets to seek for its application. A Brahmin on a fast day ("it is only among the Brahmins," says Kriloff, "that there are such hypocrites") feels inclined to eat something nourishing. In great fear of his superior, he waits till night, lights a candle, and roasts an egg over it. He is gloating by anticipation over the feast, and flattering himself that his superior will never hear of his peccadillo, when suddenly the latter enters the cell. "What is the

meaning of this?" he cries. "Deny it not; I find the egg in your hand." "Pardon me, holy father," exclaims the Brahmin, through his tears, "I do not know how I fell into such a sin, but I was tempted by the devil." Upon this the devil himself appears from behind the stove. "Are you not ashamed," he says to the Brahmin, "to calumniate me so? I have just taken a lesson from you, for never until this moment did I know how to roast an egg over the candle."

M. Xavier le Maistre has translated, with great felicity, the fable of the "Author and the Thief," which could not fail to please the admiring brother of the author of the work "*Du Pape*," and of "*Les Soirées de St. Pétersbourg*." The thief is any thief; in the author most persons will recognize Voltaire. The two arrive at the same time in the infernal regions. The robber is plunged into a vessel of boiling water, while the author is accommodated with a cauldron, in which the temperature is quite moderate. The author smiles at this, and indulges in a good many jokes at the expense of his ill-fated companion. Gradually, however, the water in the author's saucepan gets warmer and warmer, and in course of time begins to boil; while in the meantime the fire beneath the cauldron of the robber has been allowed to go out. At this the man of letters raves, and curses, inquiring why he, who never committed any offence, is to be stewed alive, when the common felon by his side is enjoying a tepid bath? Alecto, thus appealed to, appears, and the author, "recognizing his muse," is dumb. "The crimes of that assassin," says the Fury, "terminated with his life; but the number of yours increases with the multiplication of your criminal books, which, from age to age, pervert mankind. Your bones are dust; but the sun never shines without giving light to a thousand fresh crimes, the tardy but certain fruits of your atrocious works. The names of your gods you have both taken in vain and have insulted — religious in the theatre, blasphemer

in the temple. You have filled the universe with the germs of crime, which will, perhaps, be developed in a thousand years, and their fatal effects will only disappear to be reproduced again. Suffer, then, until throughout the world your books shall have ceased to corrupt, until men shall have ceased to read them."

The above is, perhaps, the most earnest of all Kriloff's fables. It is one that a professed Voltairian would object to; but it is, of course, applicable to any vicious and powerful author whose works have lived after his death to the detriment of mankind, and Kriloff himself names no one. M. Xavier le Maistre has also translated, or imitated (but not in the style of Count Orloff's contributors), Kriloff's "Friendship of the Dogs." Two dogs in a court-yard make friends. Why should they hate one another? they will fight no more; how charming is peace, &c. Suddenly a bone is thrown from a window, and the allies tear themselves to pieces for it.

Two fables, which appear to us quite Æsopian in their simplicity and significance, and which we can scarcely spoil in the very few lines we can alone devote to them, are those of the "Peasant and his Labourer"* and of the "Gnat and the Shepherd." In the former the peasant is attacked by a bear, and is about to lose his life, when the labourer appears, and, with a pitchfork, pierces the animal to the heart. "Good heavens!" cries the grateful peasant, when he has recovered from his fright, "you have spoilt the skin." In the latter, a sleeping shepherd is about to be stung by a serpent, when a friendly gnat bites him on the nose, and awakens him. The shepherd destroys the serpent, but he also kills the gnat—a warning to the benevolent not to be too officious in opening the eyes of any one.

The "Rat and the Mouse" always reminds us of the German States, who regard the power of Russia with

* In Russia, "peasants," who, though they may be serfs, are necessarily possessors of land, do employ labourers.

such, to us, unaccountable awe. "Have you heard the good news?" says a mouse to a rat; "the cat is dead! It was killed by the lion." "Nonsense!" says the rat, "if it came to nails the lion would not be alive: there is no beast so strong as the cat." This, however, is Kriloff's moral: a coward is afraid of some particular person, and imagines all the world fears him. Two agreeable little fables, the last we shall mention, are those of the "Fly and the Bee," and of the "Hare at the Hunt." The fly is the parasite of society, and is boasting to the bee of the banquets he frequents, of the viands and wines of which he partakes, and of the beauties on whose cheeks and bosoms he reposes. "But you are regarded as a nuisance," objects the bee, "and I am told that you are frequently driven from the room." "What of that?" replies the fly, "they drive me out at one window and I come in at another." In the hare we have an image of the feeble boaster. The animals have been hunting the bear, and have killed him. "It was I who caused his death," says the hare. "You?" exclaim the animals in chorus. "Yes," returns the feeble one, "for who else frightened him along the wood, and who drove him along the plain?" The animals laugh, but reward the hare for having amused them; they give him the tip of the bear's ear. "You may laugh at those who brag," says the fabulist, "but they often gain by their bragging."

Kriloff, during the last twenty years of his life, was custodian of the imperial library at St. Petersburg. He enjoyed the friendship of Poushkin, Derjavin, Joukovsky, Karamsin, Gneditch, the translator of the *Iliad*, and all the celebrated writers of Russia, to speak of whom out of Russia would be for the most part to mention unknown names. It is related as a proof of Kriloff's extraordinary though rare energy, for in ordinary matters his indolence was extreme, that at the age of fifty he commenced studying Greek, and before the expiration of two years had managed to read all the Greek poets in the

original from Homer to Anacreon. He first revealed this new accomplishment at the house of Gneditch, who, hesitating as to the exact translation of a passage in Homer, was enlightened on the subject by Kriloff. Gneditch imagined that his friend had studied Greek for the purpose of aiding him in his projected translation of the "Odyssey," but was soon undeceived. Curious stories are told of Kriloff's preternatural idleness and carelessness in his private life. He kept, it is said, a certain number of books under his bed, and when he had read these through, rather than trouble himself to get a fresh supply, read them again. His biographers smile at this; but if Kriloff's bedroom library was composed of a few very choice works, he might have smiled at them for smiling. Once, when Kriloff was going to dine with the Empress, Prince Olenyin, the most intimate friend he had, called upon him to see if his court dress was in proper order. "Do you think," said Kriloff, "I should go to visit her Majesty in my dressing-gown? I have just ordered this new uniform; look at it." The Prince inspected it, and it was fortunate he did so, for it had never struck Kriloff that he ought to take off the silver paper in which the gold buttons were enveloped.

One of Kriloff's most graceful fables (which we have not attempted to translate) has reference to the kindness shown to him by the Empress during a dangerous illness, from which he was not expected to recover. Some flowers which her Majesty sent to him at this time were so much prized by the poet, that he requested they might be buried with him, and they were, in fact, placed in his coffin, together with the laurel wreath presented to him by the authors of Russia at the celebration of his jubilee.

This event, the most important in his life, took place when Kriloff was seventy years of age—fifty years after the production of his first tragedy. In the morning the Grand Dukes Nicholas and Michael paid him a visit of

congratulation. The Emperor Nicholas sent him the order of St. Stanislas, and the Minister of Public Instruction, Prince Olenyin, Joukovsky, and other distinguished writers, delivered orations and poems in his honour at the banquet, at which three hundred of the most distinguished persons in Russia were present. "We thank you," said Joukovsky on this occasion, "first in our own name, for the happy moments we have passed communing with your genius; we thank you for the youth of the past, the present, and of future generations, who with your works began and will continue to love their national language, to understand the beautiful, and to initiate themselves in the true wisdom of life; we thank you for the Russian people, to whom in your poetry you have so clearly revealed their true spirit, and with so much that is delightful have given such profound admonitions; and, lastly, we thank you for your illustrious name, which is one of the treasures of the nation, and which for ever belongs to the annals of its glory." At the conclusion of this festival, all present subscribed for the casting of a commemorative medal; but when the Emperor heard of this project he gave orders that the medals should be produced at the Government expense; and the subscriptions had now reached such a sum that it was resolved to found two "Kriloff Scholarships" with the money, the interest of which has since been devoted to the education of two orphan children at one of the St. Petersburg gymnasiums. Kriloff had the satisfaction of naming his first two scholars himself.

In 1841 Kriloff resigned his post at the imperial library, and retired with a pension from the Emperor equivalent to six hundred pounds a year. This he enjoyed for a very short time, and died in 1844, six years after the festival. The Government gave three thousand roubles for the expenses of the funeral, and it was attended by the members of the University of St. Petersburg and of the Academy of Arts, by the most distinguished per-

sons in the empire, by the rich, by the poor—in short, by men of all classes.

Nor did the gratitude of Kriloff's compatriots cease with his death. Soon afterwards a subscription was opened for a monument in his honour, for which, that all might take part in it, the smallest contributions were received. The Emperor gave the site in the Summer Garden, and the statue of the old man in the dressing-gown, already described, was the produce of the fund.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TROITZA MONASTERY.

Kieff, the ancient capital of the Grand Princes; Moscow, the capital of the Czars; and St. Petersburg, the capital of the Emperors, have each their Laura. Of these three great religious and monasterial establishments, the most ancient is that of the Tombs at Kieff, the most interesting in historical associations that of the Troitza, or Trinity, near Moscow. The Laura of St. Alexander Nevsky at St. Petersburg is, of course, like St. Petersburg itself, of modern origin; but it commemorates the achievements of one of the earliest saints and warriors of Russia, who, in the first battle fought by the Russians against Europeans, defeated the Swedes and the Germans of Livonia on the ice of the Neva, whence his epithet of "Nevsky." "Saint and Warrior" are titles that are found linked together in the Russian calendar as frequently as those of "Virgin and Martyr" in the calendars of Catholic countries. Never was a church so severely persecuted, and for such a length of time, as that

of Russia, and but for its constant and binding influence on its children it appears certain that, under the cruel domination of the Mahometan Tartars, Christian Russia would have become Tartarized, as, according to many writers who have never visited Russia, and who are quite ignorant of the history and ethnology of the country, it actually was. The Russians are sometimes reproached with not having gone to the Crusades, but the fact is, the Crusades came to them; and from the middle of the thirteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century the history of Russia, though the nation was at that time broken up into separate and, for the most part, hostile principalities, is the history of its devotion to the Cross, of the occasional victories of its soldiers over the infidels, and of the frequent martyrdom of its chiefs.

Thus Prince Alexander of Tver, when the inhabitants of that city discovered that the Khan Usbec wished to force Islamism upon them and upon all Russia, placed himself at their head and attacked and destroyed the Tartar garrison (1327); and thus Demetrius of the Don defeated the Tartars at Koulikoff, when St. Sergius, the founder of the Troitza monastery, blessed the Russian banners, and two of his warrior-monks fell fighting on the field of battle (1380). Among the numerous martyrs of the same period are Prince Michael of Tchernigoff and his minister Theodore, who refused to fall down before the Mongol idols* and were put to death (1246); Prince Roman of Riazan, who, accused of having blasphemed against the religion of the Prophet, and refusing to become a Mahometan, was sentenced by the Khan to be chopped in pieces, and during the execution of the sentence continued to preach Christianity until his tongue was cut out (1270); and Prince Michael of Tver, who was slain at the Horde, and died reading the psalter (1320).

* During the invasion of Batu Khan, before the Tartar hordes had adopted Islamism.

The Tartars were far more formidable than is generally imagined. Miçkieviçz, who was about as much a partizan of Russia as Victor Hugo is of Napoleon III., renders full justice to his great enemy in his lectures on the Slavonians, and shows that the Russians saved Europe from a Mongol invasion. At first, after heroic struggles, they succumbed, though without losing their religion or their national unity (the latter, however, being only preserved through the former); but at last, by policy and force of arms, they cleared their territory of invaders, freed themselves from tribute, and captured all the Tartar strongholds. The actions of the Poles against the Tartars were never very important or very decisive; and if the barbarians had completely subdued Russia, still more if the Russians had basely accepted their offer of an alliance, the Mongolian torrent would have swept over Poland and inundated Germany. Though ignorant of all the arts, the Mongols had great powers of organization, and were as untiring and intrepid in their attacks as they were cruel after their victories. Gengis-Khan was unable to read and write, but he could send his messages thousands of miles. The only architecture known to his subjects was that which consisted in forming pyramids out of mortar and living men; but they established a line of posts which extended from the frontiers of Poland to China. The Poles, says their greatest writer, could never have overcome these warlike and merciless tribes, who studied nothing but the use of arms; who passed their lives on horseback, who even lived on their horses in this sense, that their chief food was horse-flesh and the milk of mares; who, at the same time, could go for days without food, and who, when they took a city by storm, put all the inhabitants to the sword except the working men.* To drive them back to their steppes beyond the Oural mountains military genius alone would not have sufficed; it re-

* It was one of the maxims of the Tartars that "The conquered could never become the friends of the conquerors."

quired also the political genius of the Russians, who knew how to encourage the contests between the Khans of Kazan and the Khans of the Crimea, and at the proper moment fell upon Kazan and Astrakhan, and captured them both by assault.

The Tartars, when they obtained possession of a Russian town, not only massacred the inhabitants, but burned the libraries, and thus mountains of books were consumed. The monasteries, which were already the fortresses of the country,* became at the same time the sole depositories of learning, and from behind their walls all the religious and patriotic combinations against the Mahometan oppressors proceeded. The catacombs in the Laura of Kieff are full of the bones of martyrs slain by the Tartars, but the historical associations of the Laura of the Troitza are all of a triumphant kind. We have seen that from the Troitza St. Sergius and his warrior-monks, who so greatly influenced the fortunes of the day, went forth to join the army of Demetrius before the battle of Koulikoff, in which the Tartar hosts were utterly routed; and from the Troitza the Archimandrite of the monastery blessed the soldiers of Prince Pojarski and Minin of Nijni-Novgorod when they were preparing to liberate Moscow from the Poles, in 1612. "A deep moat, high walls, and the very situation of the monastery," says Karamsin, "made it for some time the best fortress of our land. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the monks defended themselves with their stone walls not so much from the world's scandal as from fierce enemies in search of spoil. All the old monasteries around Moscow are built on high places, doubtless not for the sake of the view, about which pious hermits did not trouble themselves. I have seen

* The fortress on the White Sea, bombarded during the late war, was nothing but a fortified monastery. According to the Russians it was the sacred character of the edifice, together with a certain miraculous picture of the Virgin, the willing recipient of most of the projectiles, that saved it from destruction.

traces of the works from which the Poles battered down the walls of the Troitza, but among their ruins the enemy sometimes found a grave, fighting against two strong feelings—love of country and religion."

St. Sergius, the founder of the Troitza monastery, lived in the fourteenth century. A devout Russian, who passed his life in visiting the holy places of his country, and who recommended me earnestly not to leave Moscow without going to see the Troitza, was kind enough to write for my use and benefit a short biography of the patron saint, of which tradition seems to have furnished the materials. I learn from my friend's manuscript that the miraculous existence of St. Sergius—or Bartholomew, as he was baptized—commenced before his birth, and that during this prænatal period he uttered three cries which are now understood to have been symbolical of the Trinity. During his infancy and childhood the future saint remained deaf to the voice of tuition, but his parents (who belonged to the ancient nobility of Russia) having complained of their son's want of aptitude to a holy man whom young Bartholomew had found in a forest and had invited to the paternal house, the stranger sang a *Te Deum* and opened the Bible, when it was found that the boy could read fluently. The miraculous schoolmaster then became invisible. It was not until after his parents' death that Bartholomew assumed his monachal name of Sergius, retired from the world, and founded the monastery of the Troitza, or Trinity. There this "man of heaven and angel of earth" lived a life of unexampled holiness, until "even the wild beasts of the forest respected him, and lost, in his presence, their habitual ferocity."

The most important siege sustained by the Troitza monastery was in 1612, when it was attacked by the Poles in great numbers and with a powerful artillery. The monks, aided by a small military force, made a desperate defence. Many perished on the walls, but at last the

Polish army was repulsed, its commander, the gallant Lisoski, being slain.

Peter the Great, during the first insurrection of the Strelitzi, took refuge at the Troitza monastery.

The Troitza, in spite of its immense wealth, acquired in offerings from all parts of Russia, was not plundered by the French in 1812, at which the Marquis de Custine and Baron Haxthausen cannot but express their surprise, the latter estimating that of valuable pearls alone there are more in the Laura of the Troitza than in all the rest of Europe. The legend on the subject says that it was left undefended, that Murat was ordered to take it, but that, looking in the direction of the monastery from the Kremlin, he saw a large army of soldiers in black posted along the road, and reported to the Emperor that, with the force placed at his disposition, it was impossible to make the attack. Need I say that this was a miraculous appearance? The black soldiers were the monks of past ages, and the author of my manuscript notes assures me that St. Sergius himself reviewed them, after receiving the blessing of Plato, the Metropolitan of Moscow, who, however, did not recognize the saint until a later period, and from memory. So, during the siege of the monastery by the Poles, I learn, from the same authority, that an old man, answering to the description of St. Sergius, used to appear on horseback in the clouds and encourage the monks to do battle against the besiegers.

The Troitza monastery is about forty miles from Moscow, and all along the route pilgrims may be seen sitting, and, in the summer, lying down beneath the shade of the trees, at every village on the way. The *moujik* in his perpetual sheepskin, warranted to keep out heat as well as cold, the merchant in his caftan, and at times persons of all conditions, may be seen walking slowly in the direction of the monastery, esteeming the journey to be of more efficacy from the fact of its being accomplished on

foot. The peasant wears shoes or slippers—canoe-shaped contrivances—made out of the bark of the willow tree. If by chance he has leather shoes he carries them on his back, so as not to wear them out. Here and there a devout traveller is accompanied by his wife, who wears a long veil to protect her from the sun and dust, and an umbrella to screen her from the sun and rain. Behind comes a *kibitka*, where the lady who owns it has taken care to place a mattress, cushions, and, above all, an urn in which to prepare boiling water for tea before retiring to rest at night. Slowly, by short marches, these pilgrims are wending their way towards the church of St. Sergius, in the Laura of the Troitza. The road is rough as well as long, and those who visit the monastery in the capacity of tourists, naturally do not walk there, but go either in the diligence, which leaves Moscow three times a week, or in a private carriage. Similar means of locomotion are resorted to at present by a large number of the pilgrims themselves, and only those who are very devout or very poor make the entire journey on foot. Those who hire a carriage for themselves usually start from Moscow at night, or at about three in the morning, taking with them a proper supply of pillows, or even a bed and bedclothes—for the Russians understand nocturnal travelling, and do their eight or nine miles an hour in spacious vehicles, which are tolerable sitting-rooms by day and not uncomfortable bed-rooms by night. After breakfasting and visiting the monastery, there is plenty of time to dine and return to Moscow before the evening is very far advanced.

A few miles before arriving at the monastery the coachman, if he knows the traditions of the road, will stop at a place where a hermit, who died twenty or thirty years since, spent the greater part of his life in boring a passage through the earth to a little chapel in the immediate vicinity, by the side of which he now lies buried.

At Khatkoff the pilgrim usually pauses to prostrate

himself before the relics of Sts. Cyrillus and Mary, the father and mother of St. Sergius. The convent in which the relics are kept is surrounded by a wood, and is in the form of a long street closed at each end by a huge gate, in which is a tower containing a little chapel.

On leaving Khatkoff we pass through another wood and emerge upon a plain from which the cupolas of the monastery are visible. Soon afterwards we come to a few huts, an inn, and a row of shops or stalls, at which images, relics and souvenirs of the monastery, in every shape, are sold. Money-changers—in rags like the pedestrian pilgrims themselves—are present to supply the faithful with the most convenient coin for almsgiving, and beggars ready to receive the alms are certainly not wanting. Indeed there are beggars all along the road, and with reason; for how can those who are offering up their prayers hope that they will be heard, if they refuse a mite to a fellow-creature who declares himself to be starving, and who, in spite of his usually lucrative calling, may perchance be actually in that condition?

These beggars are very liberal in their offers of intercession, and some volunteered for a very few copeiks to pray for all our party for the space of a year. The seniors of the profession, however, were less moderate in their demands, and one well-dressed, warmly-clad, prosperous-looking alms-seeker, on whom five copeiks (equivalent to twopence) had been bestowed—less in pity than in acknowledgment of his affability and of his very original demeanour in the capacity of mendicant—objected to the sum, that it would not enable him to buy a pair of gloves. He was wearing a pair of thick fur gauntlets at the time, but perhaps he wished to go to a ball.

An air of sanctity pervades not only the Laura, but the village or burgh that has grown up around it, and which stands on the monasterial estate. The caravanserais, called hotels, are eminently penitential, dirty, comfortless resting-places, without beds, bedding, or any sleeping ac-

commodation beyond sofas, of which there is one in every room, and without any washing accommodation beyond basins and water, but with plenty of views of the Troitza, its cathedrals and churches; portraits of St. Sergius, Nikon, his disciple, and Plato, the late Archimandrite of the monastery and Metropolitan of Moscow;* and with representations of the Last Judgment, and of the grotesque horrors "Gospodin Tchort" ("Mr. Devil") proposes to inflict upon the wicked—among which a prolonged residence in one of the Troitza hostelries is *not* included. I had been amused at Moscow by the precautions of a young Russian belonging to our party, who had packed up a number of towels in his portmanteau; but I afterwards found, and was rejoiced to find, that the family, whose invitation I had accepted, had actually filled their carriages with bedding, in default of which we should have suffered a good deal from our two nights' lodging at the Troitza, to say nothing of jolting on the road, from which the ladies were saved by the intervention of pillows. The Russians talk a great deal of their sledging, which is indeed delightful when the roads are good and the frozen snow lies evenly along them, but only then. Plenty of snow will make bad roads comparatively good, but a drift after a heavy fall will spoil the best road in the world for pleasant travelling; and we found that of the Troitza covered with wave-like ridges, up and down which the heavy carriages heaved and plunged, until their ship-like movement was testified to by the (*quasi*) sea-sickness of one or two of the more delicate of the travellers.

Intending visitors to Russia who may see this book, will do well to remember that it is only in the foreign hotels of St. Petersburg and Moscow that they must expect to obtain bedrooms furnished with the essential

* One of the most learned men the Russian Church ever possessed. When Joseph II., on his return from Russia, was asked what he found most worthy of admiration in that country, he is said to have replied, "The Metropolitan Plato."

articles of bedroom furniture. At a true Russian hotel they will find nothing in the rooms but a few chairs, a table, a sofa, and a portrait of his Imperial Majesty. There is always a restaurant attached to the place, but the hotel-keeper no more counts on your requiring him to supply you with sheets and blankets for your sofa, than on your asking him to lend you a night-shirt. Russians to whom I have spoken about the wretched inn accommodation of the country, while agreeing with me generally, have added that as to sheets they would not sleep in any but their own, and have expressed surprise and dissatisfaction when I have assured them that in travelling westward they would do well to leave their sheets and pillows at home, and have full confidence in the hotel-keepers of the cities they visited. It has often amused me since to think of the commotion that would be caused at the superb hotel recently opened at Königsberg by the attempt of a Russian family, just arrived from the frontier, to substitute their own candid linen for the suspicious bedclothes furnished by the proprietor.

On each side of the entrance to the monastery there are booths, at which pictures, images, and all kinds of "souvenirs" of the Troitza are sold. Here, too, the pilgrim who is disposed to cleanliness may purchase soap. Brushes also will be pressed upon him—tooth and nail—with "Atkinson, London," engraved upon the handles, but which have probably no more come from Bond Street than the Troitza perfumers' "Brown Windsor," which is enclosed in silver paper and labelled as above, but is, in itself, a curious-looking, ill-smelling, greasy, greyish compound. Thus I have seen bone-buttons in Russia with "Best double-gilt" engraved upon them, and Madeira, with "Dry Madère des Indes, H. B. and Co., London," on the bottles. So also packets of tobacco, with "Tabac à l'usage de la noblesse Turque," printed on the paper.

After our first short visit to the monastery, a monk, to whom we had a letter of introduction, advised us to shift

our quarters at once to an hotel attached and belonging to the establishment. This was, in all respects, an improvement upon the private inn, except as regarded bedroom furniture. But I now began to understand that a broad sofa was, after all, quite as good as a bed, and that at Russian hotels it was decidedly best not to look to the proprietors for linen. The cooking was admirable; it was worthy of any restaurant or any monastery in Europe, and seemed to show that if there were times for fasting, there were also times for feasting at the Laura of the Troitza. The rooms too, if not thoroughly well furnished, were convenient and, above all, cheap—for there was nothing to pay for them. The monastery lodges travellers gratuitously, charging them, however, for their food, and suffering them to contribute whatever they think fit to the monasterial fund. When we were about to leave, a monk, looking very much like Don Basil in the "Barber of Seville," entered with downcast eyes, and with a money-box in his hand. Into this you drop as many or as few roubles as you like. If you choose to dine *in formâ pauperis*, there is a *table d'hôte* every day in the monastery, which is open to all pilgrims.

The solitary habitation of Sergius the poor hermit was the nucleus of the now spacious and magnificent Laura of the Trinity. Other holy men, warriors, as well as theologians, congregated around the saint at a time when all who were good and brave in the country felt deeply the degradation to which the persecution of the artars had reduced Christian Russia; and we have seen that from the hermits and soldier-monks of the Troitza the *idea* of the great battle of Koulikoff proceeded. During the darkest period of Russian history, the Church produced a great number of men remarkable for devotion, patriotism, and high ability. Indeed, from Nestor, the author of the "Chronicles" (the oldest work written in a modern European language), to Philaret, the present Metropolitan of Moscow, the list of Russian ecclesiastics

who have deserved well of their country is a long one. The Patriarch Nikon, 1605–81, like Nestor, Plato, and, we may add, Philaret, is chiefly known by his writings,—that is to say, by his "Annals," and his new version of the Holy Scriptures, into the ancient Slavonian text of which many errors had crept; but Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow, besides being a man of great learning and eloquence, possessed high political genius, and prepared the combination of Russian princes under Demetrius against the Tartars. St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, after protesting in vain against the cruelties of Ivan the Terrible, condemned his atrocious life with solemn indignation in the cathedral of the Kremlin, and was in consequence tortured to death. Hermogenes, Metropolitan of Moscow, refusing to crown Ladislas, the Polish prince, when the Poles held the Russian capital (1612), was thrown into prison, and died of hunger. Philaret, his successor (father of Michael, the first of the Romanoffs), having similarly refused, was carried away by the Poles in their retreat, and kept nine years a captive in Poland. For a proof of the mental and moral superiority of the high clergy to the other classes in Russia, during Peter the Great's reign, see in Voltaire's Life the dignified and charitable answers given by the synod to Peter's questions as to the guilt of his son and the punishment proper to be inflicted upon him.

But to return to the Troitza.

All the inscriptions in and about the monastery are in old Slavonian,* which is still the ecclesiastical language of Russia, as it is also the language of the Russian navy in so far as regards the naming of ships; doubtless sea-captains command as preachers preach, in the modern Russian tongue. The name over the little shed where the holy images are sold is in Slavonian; the text above

* Church Slavonian differs (though but slightly) from modern Russian in alphabet, in vocabulary, and even in construction. Thus the former has a dual number, which the latter does not possess.

the poor-box in the chapel of the hospital is in Slavonian —everything, in short, except the bill at the monasterial hotel, which was in good Russian.

The golden-headed towers, the gold crosses, the painted and bestarred cupolas, which present such a brilliant picture to the traveller approaching the Troitza, are all grouped around the Cathedral of the Assumption, which is built after the model of the one of the same name in the Kremlin. Here is seen the tomb of Boris Godounoff, whom Karamsin (who, however, lived before the "rehabilitation" of the Protector) regards as the Cromwell of Russia; also an altar given by Peter the Great in memory of his having found protection at the Troitza during the insurrection of the musketeers.

Between the Cathedral of the Assumption and the Treasury stands an obelisk, on which a record is preserved of the principal services rendered by the Troitza monastery to the State. In the Treasury, too, are the rich sacerdotal robes and gold and silver plate which the monks carried out to the mutinous, unpaid Cossacks of Prince Troubetzkoi in 1612, a sight which at once recalled the discontented troops to their duty. Among the other treasures of the place are the shoes of St. Sergius, a good deal down at heel; a blue caftan, once the property of Ivan the Terrible; the bridle of Prince Pojarski's horse; a letter from the Emperor Paul, announcing the birth of Nicholas, to the Metropolitan Plato; and, above all, a "natural Panagia," supposed to be a miraculous product, and which is, at all events, one of the most wonderful curiosities in the monastery, being the distinct image of a monk kneeling before a crucifix, formed by the veins in a semi-transparent agate which is said to have been found in the Oural mountains. The agate, oval in shape and about four inches high, is set like a broach with an *entourage* of diamonds and pearls forming a halo, and is surrounded by a crown ornamented with six pearls as large as pistol bullets. The picture is ap-

parently in the heart of the stone. It looks dull and opaque on one side, but on the other it is bright, and the eyes of the monk can be seen.

Let me now say in as few words as possible what else I saw of interest at the Troitza monastery. First, the monks in black caftans, in high black caps or hats like brimless gibuses, with long black veils hanging down at the back, and for the most part with equally long black hair. They were at dinner in the every-day refectory (there is a handsomer one for Sundays), all eating, drinking, talking, and apparently enjoying themselves, except one who read aloud with great volubility and evident consciousness that no one was listening to him. There were monks in the cathedral, in two long rows chanting the service,—a magnificent choir. Then there were monks in their cells, and monks in one of the chapels singing the "Eternal Memory" for a departed soul, and monks in the church of the Holy Trinity, before the shrine of St. Sergius, performing a service of thanksgiving for a pilgrim restored to health. This was not the season for pilgrims, but the churches and chapels nevertheless seemed full of them, and of whining but warmly-clad beggars offering to pray for them. The shrine of the saint, containing his "uncorrupted body," which it is the great object of pilgrims to see, is shaped like an enormous four-post bedstead (about twenty feet high), and is of solid silver. The pilgrims to whom the "uncorrupted body" was shown threw themselves on their knees at the sight of it, and sobbed and smote their breasts. To them this was the actual St. Sergius who defeated the Tartars, whose figure was seen hovering above the monastery during its siege by the Poles, who again through the miraculous appearance of his army of monks saved the Troitza from the desecration of the French in 1812,* and who still cures those

* Innocent, Archbishop of Odessa, in one of his sermons to the garrison of Sebastopol (published in the *Russian Messenger*), predicted a fourth reappearance of this patriotic saint.

who believe of all sorts of ailments. I went on, however, to the monasterial painting academy, where twenty "artists" and thirty "artists' pupils" were at work, and painting, not from Byzantine *eikons* or from any sort of Pre-Raphaelite pictures, but from copies and engravings of Raphael himself, of Leonardo, and even of Horace Vernet. I was glad to find that Russia was liberating her artistic serfs, and that even in the ancient monastery of the Troitza a Raphaelite and Post-Raphaelite school was being formed. In a small picture-gallery adjoining the studio, between a portrait of the Emperor and one of Metropolitans of Moscow, was a spirited representation of the assault on the Troitza by the Polish besiegers. I had still to visit the ramparts and to ascend the golden-headed bell-tower, which rises high above the red, and green roofs of the monastery and the glittering cupolas and crosses of its numerous churches and cathedrals. How they shone in the clear, dry atmosphere from the midst of the interminable snow which surrounded the Laura on all sides, and which sparkled like diamonds in a sunshine that would have done credit to July! The blue sky was without a cloud, and the bars and delicate chains of gold of the church-tops seemed to burn beneath the rays of the mid-day sun, which, however, gave little heat with its light, for at the Holy Well the water almost turned to ice as you bore it to your lips, and in a few seconds the wet glasses froze into fixtures wherever you set them down. I was given to understand that had I been sick the water of the Holy Well would have cured me. There was nothing the matter with me, but I can testify that it did me no harm.

CHAPTER XV.

WINTER—AT HOME AND IN THE STREETS.

It is said that people see the cold in Russia, and feel it in Italy. When I was in Russia I certainly saw the cold, and it did not appear at all necessary to go to Italy in order to feel it. Still, so great and effective are the precautions taken against the common enemy, that when fortified behind double, or perhaps treble, windows in a thick-walled house, and protected in your occasional *sorties* by a stout armour of fur, you have nothing to fear from the attacks of this most unmerciful assailant.

Russia in the summer is no more like Russia in the winter than a camp in time of peace is like a camp in presence of the enemy. Moreover, snow is one of the chief natural productions of the country; and without it Russia is as uninteresting as an orchard without fruit. We always think of Russia in connection with its frosts, and of its frosts in connection with such great events as the campaign of 1812, or the visit of the deputation from the Peace Society to the Emperor Nicholas. Accordingly, a foreigner in Russia naturally looks forward to the winter with much interest, mingled perhaps with a certain amount of awe. He waits for it, in fact, as a man waits for a thief, expecting the visitor with a certain kind of apprehension, and not without a due provision of life-preservers in the shape of goloshes, seven-leagued boots, scarves, fur coats, &c.

The house I lived in was in the middle of Moscow; and, with the exception of the stoves, the internal arrangement seemed like that of most other dwellings in Europe. The Russian stoves, however, are, in fact, thick hollow party-walls, built of brick, and sometimes separating, or connecting, as many as three or four rooms,

and heating them all from one common centre. The outer sides of these lofty intramural furnaces are usually faced with a kind of white porcelain, though in some houses they are papered like the rest of the wall, so that the presence of the stove is only known in summer by two or three apertures like port-holes, which have been made for the purpose of admitting the hot air, and which, when there is no heat within, are closed with round metal covers like the tops of canisters. Sometimes, especially in country houses, the stove, or *peitchka* as it is called, is not only a wall, but a wall which, towards the bottom, projects so as to form a kind of dresser or sofa, and which the lazier of the inmates use not unfrequently in the latter capacity. In the huts the *peitchka* is almost invariably of this form; and the peasants not only lie and sleep upon it as a matter of course, but even get inside and use it as a bath. Not that they fill their stoves with water,—that would be rather difficult; but the Russian bath is merely a room paved with stone slabs and heated like an oven, in which the bather stands to be rubbed and lathered, and to have buckets of water poured over him, or thrown at him, by naked attendants; and accordingly a stove makes an excellent bath on a small scale. As a general rule, every row of huts has one or more baths attached to it, which the inhabitants support by subscription; but when this is not the case, the peasant, after carefully raking out the ashes, creeps into the hot *peitchka*, and is soon bathed in his own perspiration. He would infallibly be baked alive but for the pailfuls of water with which he soon begins to cool his heated skin. Thanks, however, to this precaution, he issues from the fiery furnace uninjured, and, it is to be hoped, benefited.

When a stove is being heated, the port-holes are kept carefully shut, to prevent the egress of carbonic-acid gas; but after the wood has become thoroughly charred, and every vestige of flame has disappeared, the chimney is closed on a level with the garret floor, the covers are

removed from the apertures in the side of the stove, and the hot air is allowed to penetrate freely into the room; which, if enough wood has been put into the *petchka*, and the lid of the chimney closes hermetically, will, by this one fire, be kept warm for twelve or fourteen hours.

Occasionally it happens that the port-holes are opened while there still flickers a little blue flame above the whitening embers. In this case there is death in the stove. The carbonic-acid gas, which is still proceeding from the burning charcoal, enters the room, and produces asphyxia, or at all events some of its symptoms. If you have not time, or if you are already too weak, to open the door when you find yourself attacked by *ougar* (as the Russians call this gas), you had better throw the first thing you have at hand through the window; and the cold air, rushing rapidly into the room, will then save you. A foreigner unaccustomed to the hot apartments of Russia will scarcely perceive the presence of *ougar* until he is already seriously affected by it; and in this manner the son of the Persian ambassador lost his life two or three years since in one of the principal hotels of Moscow. A native, however, if the stove should chance to be "covered" before the wood is thoroughly charred, will detect the presence of the fatal gas almost instantaneously; and having done so, the best remedy he can adopt for the headache and sickness, which even then will inevitably follow, is to rush into the open air, and cool his temples by copious applications of snow. Persons who are almost insensible from the effect of *ougar* have to be carried out and rolled in the snow,—a process which speedily restores them to their natural condition.

The attention of the stranger on entering a Russian house is at once attracted by the *eikon*, or image of the Saviour, the Virgin, or some saint, in one of the corners of each room. The reader is aware that the Russians, like the rest of the Eastern Church, are half iconoclasts; and that their religion excludes statuary, but

enjoins the use of consecrated pictures. These images or ornamented paintings (the ornaments may be in the highest possible relief, but the images must not be literally *graven* images) are the Russian household gods, and are found in the rooms of every habitation, rich or poor, great or small. They attract your notice in the dismal cabins of the little steam-tugs which ply between Cronstadt and St. Petersburg, otherwise completely destitute of furniture; and you may discover them in the magnificent galleries of the Hermitage, where they naturally make but a mean appearance in presence of the master-pieces of Italian and Flemish art. The holy pictures belong, one and all, to the Byzantine school. The glory round the head of the Saviour or Virgin is of solid metal—sometimes of silver or gold, but usually of brass, or at best of silver gilt; and when the image does not stand in a favourable light, the halo, which is alone visible, looks like a horseshoe nailed to the wall. Sometimes the whole of the garments are covered with gilt plate, and the only parts of the painting which can be seen are the face and hands; so that many of these compositions deserve to be looked upon as so much goldsmith's work rather than as productions of art.* Many of them (though fewer than formerly) are, indeed, manufactured in the true sense of the word at Souzdal, a town in the government of Vladimir, which is celebrated for its images, as Toula is famous for its hardwares, Tarjok for its embroidered leather, and so on. There are seldom more than three colours employed, and each of these has its own separate set of artists (or journeymen, as they may with more propriety be termed),

* The most celebrated specimen of the class is the immortal panagia of the Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin, which is nothing less (as the faithful affirm) than the Virgin, painted by St. Luke himself. It is surrounded by a frame of solid gold, and decorated with a jewelled halo, of which the principal ruby is worth 80,000 roubles; while the total value of the gold-work and precious stones is said to amount to 200,000 roubles.

just as in the now obsolete horn-bands of Russia each note had its own particular executant. The only point at all remarkable in the workmanship of the Souzdal fraternity, is the fineness and evenness of the colouring. The painting is executed on a perfectly smooth surface of very hard wood: the painter dilutes his colour with large quantities of oil, and as he progresses polishes his work with a preparation of pumice-stone. When the artificer in red has finished his portion of the performance, he hands it to the artificer in yellow, who in his turn passes it on to the artificer in blue; then the worker in metal affixes the halo; and all is ready for the frame-maker, if a frame happens to be required. There are shops in every large town devoted exclusively to the sale of *eikons:* and an *eikon* is the only thing in Russia which is bought and sold without the least haggling about the price; for to attempt to cry down the value, even in a commercial sense, of a holy image, would be considered worse than unbecoming, while any attempt at extortion on the part of the vendor would of course be equally culpable.

The size of the images is generally in inverse proportion to the social rank of the person whose habitation they sanctify and adorn. Thus, in the booths of that permanent fair, the Gastinnoi Dvor, they assume the dimensions of historical pictures, for the Russian dealer is as devout as he is cunning; in the private residences of the merchants of the first guild they are about as large as *genre* paintings; while in the houses of the nobles they seldom extend beyond the modest limits of a miniature. The smallest *eikon* I ever saw was in the dining-room of the Nobles' Club at Moscow, where, close to the ceiling in the eastern corner, is a black little image, looking at a distance like the queen of spades, and certainly not much bigger.

Facing the house in which I lived were two detached houses, with the usual courtyards and *portes-cochères.* One of them had white walls and a high sloping roof of dark

red sheet-iron; the walls of the other were painted a very light yellow, and its roof was of a pale green. The light yellow walls enclosed a Tartar family, of which the most interesting portion—to a stranger at least—was never visible.

The men, on the other hand, were most liberal in exhibiting themselves. They were constantly to be seen in their gaudy silken dressing-gowns, and their round skull-caps ribbed with red and yellow. Sometimes these Tartars would make incursions into my apartments, and insist on selling me shawls, silks, and, above all, dressing-gowns, at eight times their original cost. On another occasion they would come over with propositions for disposing of a ton of Indian ink to a friend of mine, whom they happened to see making a sketch, and who they were determined should not be stopped in his pursuit of art by want of materials. Probably horse-flesh is difficult to digest; for every day after each meal the Tartars would spend three or four hours sitting or lying down on the stone bench in front of their dwelling, and immediately opposite my windows. In the early part of September the bench did not occupy altogether more than four or five hours of their time, and by the middle of the month they had nearly abandoned it. One morning about that period I observed a little puddle in the street with ice on the top, and from that day the Tartars took to digesting their horse-flesh indoors. Then to my alarm one of them came out again with a fur-coat, or *shouba*, which he began to brush with much care, as though he expected before long to have use for it. A few days afterwards I saw a sledge being conveyed along the street on the top of a cart laden with firewood. This produced the same sort of impression upon me that I experienced in Paris on the 3rd of December, 1851, when, before the firing had commenced, I saw a party of soldiers marching in the direction of the boulevard in charge of very significant *brancards*.

The next morning there was a fall of snow; and the

cream was brought in from the country in jars wrapped carefully round with matting to prevent its freezing. Hundreds of cabbages and thousands of potatoes, similarly protected, were purchased and stowed away. Furlongs of wood (in Russia wood is sold by the foot) were laid up in the courtyard; an inspector of stoves arrived to see that every *peitchka* was in proper working order; and an examiner and fitter-in of windows was summoned to adjust the usual extra sash. At last the windows had been made fast, each pane being at the same time reputtied into its frame. On the window-sill, in the space between the outer and inner panes, was something resembling a long deep line of snow, which was, however, merely a mass of cotton-wool placed there as an additional protection against the external air. Indeed, the winds of the Russian winter have such powers of penetration that, in a room guarded by *triple* windows, besides shutters closed with the greatest exactness, I have seen the curtains slightly agitated when the howling outside was somewhat louder than usual. "The wind," says Gregorovitch in his "Winter's Tale," "howls like a dog; and like a dog will bite the feet and calves of those who have not duly provided themselves with fur goloshes and doubly-thick pantaloons." Such a wind must not be suffered to intrude into any house intended to be habitable.

Besides the cotton-wool, which is a special provision against draughts, the space between the two sashes is usually adorned with artificial flowers: indeed, the fondness of the Russians for flowers and green leaves during the winter is remarkabe. The corridors are converted into greenhouses, by means of trellis-work covered with creepers. The windows of many of the apartments are encircled by evergreens, and in the drawing-rooms, flower-stands form the principal ornaments. At the same time enormous sums are paid for bouquets from the hothouses which abound in both the capitals. Doubtless the long winters have some share in the production of this passion

for flowers and green plants, just as love of country is increased by exile, and love of liberty by imprisonment.

There are generally at least two heavy snow-storms by way of warning before winter fairly commences its reign. The first fall of snow thaws perhaps a few days afterwards, the second in about a week, the third in five months. If a lady drops her bracelet or brooch in the street during the period of this third fall, she need not trouble herself to put out handbills offering a reward for its discovery, at all events not before the spring; for it will be preserved in its hiding-place, as well as ice can preserve it, until about the middle of April, when, if the amount of the reward be greater than the value of the article lost, it will in all probability be restored to her. The Russians put on their furs at the first signs of winter, and the sledges make their appearance in the streets as soon as the snow is an inch or two thick. Of course at such a time a sledge is far from possessing any advantage over a carriage on wheels; but the Russians welcome their appearance with so much enthusiasm, that the first sledge-drivers are sure of excellent receipts for several days. The droshkies disappear one by one with the black mud of autumn; and by the time the gilt cupolas of the churches, and the red and green roofs of the houses, have been made whiter than their own walls, the city swarms with sledges. It is not, however, until near Christmas, when the "frost of St. Nicholas" sets in, that they are seen in all their glory. The earlier frosts of October and November may or may not be attended to without any very dangerous results ensuing; but when the frigid St. Nicholas makes his appearance,—staying the most rapid currents, forming bridges over the broadest rivers, and converting seas into deserts of ice,—then a blast from his breath, if not properly guarded against, may prove fatal. However, foreigners alone are afraid of him. He is the Russian's best friend. Of the Russian peasant he is not only the patron-saint, but also the real benefactor. He is the greatest engineer in the country, and

does more in the department of roads and bridges in a single night than the notorious Kleinmichel did in the whole course of his ministry. But when he approaches you, you must not go out to meet him otherwise than in a garment of fur, or the disrespect may be visited upon you with severity. This is the sole return he requires for his services in enabling you to receive the veal of Archangel and the beef of the Steppes, which can only be transported in winter along his excellent roads.

The year I was in Moscow St. Nicholas was nearly playing false to his devotees. The winter appeared to have set in for a continuance in November, and provisions were beginning to arrive from the country, when suddenly there was a thaw, and soon afterwards the smaller rivers, which, as they freeze the first, are also the first to break up, were pronounced unsafe. Accordingly the peasants, on arriving with their sledges at the Oka, distant about twenty miles from Moscow, waited on its banks before risking their precious lives, and, what was more important, their valuable provisions, on its treacherous ice. As the thaw continued, the river became in some places quite impassable, and the peasants found themselves in this dilemma: if they attempted to cross the Oka, they and the contents of their sledges might be lost together; but if they remained where they were, the poultry and meat which they had intended to convey to Moscow would inevitably spoil, and they would have to return home without provisions and without money. Now the peasants on their road to the Moscow markets take their meals at the wayside inns on credit, and pay as they go home after they have effected a sale; so that to return without money was out of the question. Accordingly *rustici expectaverunt*, and in this case with some reason; for though it was beginning to flow, the river was certainly not destined to roll on *in omne volubilis ævum*. In the midst of the difficulty, like the devil in a German legend, a Jew appeared on the banks of the Oka.

The provisions were still sound, and the Oka, though now nearly free from ice, might be converted into a hard road almost in a single night. At all events, if the frost once recommenced, the provisions were safe; and a Jew can always wait for his money, if by a few days' delay it will become tripled and quadrupled. Accordingly the Hebrew offered some sort of pottage on the spot for the right of taking all the sledges with their contents to the Moscow markets as soon as an opportunity presented itself. Whether he also offered something to St. Nicholas is unknown; but that night the mercury fell, the next morning the ground was covered with snow, and before evening the Oka was again a road, and the sledges on their way to the "Frozen Market" of Moscow, where they arrived just in time for the Nikolsky fête.

The Frozen Market is one of the most curious in Moscow, which abounds in markets of a curious kind. There is the market for the hiring of domestic servants; the horse-market, beloved by gipsies; the market for earthen pots, and the market for wooden pails. There is the fruit-market, especially pleasing to foreigners from its delicious water-melons in the autumn, and its admirable frozen apples, like lumps of apple-ice, in the winter. There is the hay-market, where, besides hay, cream, butter, eggs, and all kinds of farm produce are exposed for sale. There is the market of the Soukhareff Tower, for the sale of furniture, clothes, sledges, tea-urns, screw-drivers, rusty nails, secondhand books, and especially stray numbers of the "Russian Messenger," the "Contemporary," the "National Annals," the "Muscovite," and other indigenous reviews. Then there is the market for odoriferous sheepskins and moth-eaten *shoubas*, vamped-up winter-boots, huge leather gloves, shaped like baby's mittens, Cossack and Circassian caps, felt goloshes, caftans, and girdles, to say nothing of fish-pies, salted cucumbers, boiled liver, raspberry kvass, black bread, and other "delicacies of the season," for buyers and sellers; a market whose popular and emphatic name is "Louse Market,"

and where you may have your handkerchief stolen from you at one end and offered to you for sale at the other. But none of these markets are so strikingly Russian as the Frozen Market. It is not until the fête of St. Nicholas—or later still, the week between Christmas and the new year—that this strange exhibition is to be seen in all its glory. By that time the severe period of winter has fairly set in. The soldiers, tall, stalwart men, are wearing their long gray coats over their heavy knapsacks, which bulge out and make them look like so many hunchbacks; while the broad black bandages which protect their ears and cheeks give them the appearance of persons suffering from tooth-ache. The cold has indeed had some effect upon them; for as they march in from the country their raw faces are as red as beef, and their frozen moustaches as white as horseradish. Every *moujik* with his long and literally snow-white beard looks like an allegorical figure of Winter. The blackest horses are now piebald, thanks to the hoar-frost which has decorated their sides; while the congelation of their breath round the long hairs that project from their nostrils adds to the peculiarity of their appearance, and furnishes them with a set of spikes such as calves wear in weaning-time.

But although the drivers and horses of the sledges, as they hurry towards the market-place, form a by no means uninteresting part of the exhibition, their loads, when taken out and arranged with a view to sale, present a picture which is far more striking. On one side you see a collection of frozen sheep,—stiff ghastly objects,—some poised on their hoofs like the wooden animals in a child's "Noah's Ark;" others on their sides, with their legs projecting exactly at right angles to their bodies; others, again, on their backs, with their feet in the air, after the manner of inverted tables. The oxen are only less grotesque from having been cleft down the back—an operation which seems to take them out of the category of oxen and place them in that of beef. The pigs are

drawn up in line against a wall, standing on their hind-legs with their fore-feet extended above their heads, in an attitude of exhortation.

Among the poultry and game, the hares are especially remarkable, from the fact that their fur, which through the summer is either brown or gray, has at the approach of winter turned completely white; a provision of nature which enables the Russian and Siberian hare to travel through the snow in quest of food with a certain amount of impunity, though for all that it never fails to be represented at the winter-markets of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The partridges, quails, grouse, heath-cocks, wood-hens, &c., are lying together in a frozen mass; and by their side are the ducks and geese, with outstretched necks, so straight and stiff that you might take one of these harmless birds by the bill, and, using it as a bludgeon, knock your enemy down with the body. The fowls have been plucked, plunged into water, and left to freeze. Thus they are completely encased in ice, and in that condition will keep for any time. And to think that Newton wished to satisfy himself by experiment that fowls could be so preserved, and that the experiment cost him his life! What would a *moujik* think of such a philosopher?

Besides game of every kind, not only from the neighbouring governments, but even from Finland and Siberia, the markets of St. Petersburg and Moscow are supplied with fish from every sea and river in the empire. Lomonossof, the earliest Russian poet, the author of the first Russian dictionary, and one of the most celebrated chemists and natural philosophers the country ever produced, made his first appearance in St. Petersburg with a sledge-load of fish from the White Sea, where his father gained his living as a fisherman. The Black Sea and the Caspian also contribute largely. The Don sends its sturgeons, after the roe has been duly extracted for the purpose of making caviar; and the Volga its rich, oily, yellow-fleshed sterlet, invaluable for fish-soup. The pre-

sence of the sterlet is the more welcome in the winter-markets from the fact that this delicately-organized and exquisitely-flavoured fish will only live in the water of the Volga. But in winter there is no necessity for it to live at all after it has once been caught, as it can be conveyed in its frozen state to the extremities of the empire without losing any of its freshness, or any very perceptible amount of its taste.

The mode of catching fish in the winter is simple enough. A hole is made in the ice, and the fish rush to it for the sake of the air. Then, in the case of the sturgeons of the Don, the Cossacks "of that ilk" harpoon them; while elsewhere the smaller fish, equally in want of air, precipitate themselves into the nets that await them, and thus get, if not out of the frying-pan into the fire, at least out of the ice into the frying-pan.

Another peculiarity of the Frozen Market is, that it takes place in the middle of an improvised wood,—a wood which suggests the forest in "Macbeth," and which is composed entirely of evergreens for Christmas-trees. Beneath the shade of this portable thicket are sold brooms, wooden spades for clearing away the snow from before the houses, and the hand-sledges in which servants and shopmen draw their parcels through the streets; for it would be out of the question to carry anything at all heavy or cumbersome when by such simple means it may be pulled with ease along the slippery pavement.

Nor must I forget the itinerant vendors of sucking-pigs, who start from the Frozen Market with whole litters of the interesting little animals, not much larger than guinea-pigs, hanging from their necks and waists; nor the dealers in dried mushrooms, who string those leathern delicacies together like pieces of brown paper on the tail of a kite, and wear them in garlands about their sheep-skinned persons. A similar kind of pedlar is to be found in the man who is hung all over with chains and rings of thin whity-brown bread,—doubtless a friend

MOSCOW TEA VENDOR.

His friend the advertiser carries on his back the portrait of Miss Julia Pastrana, who was exhibited last winter in Moscow.

to the owner of the tumbler and tea-urn who walks about the commercial quarter and sells hot tea to the bearded and caftaned merchants.

I have said that it is not until the *Nikólsky Maros*, or Frost of St. Nicholas, that the sledges fly through the streets in all their glory. By that time the rich "*boyars*"* (as foreigners persist in styling the Russian noblemen of the present day) have arrived from their estates, and the poor peasants, who have long ceased to till the ground, and have now thrashed all the corn, begin to come in from theirs; for, humble and dependent as he may be, each peasant has nevertheless his own patch of land. For the former are the elegant sledges of polished nut-wood, with rugs of soft thick fur to protect the legs of the occupants; whose drivers, in their green caftans fastened round the waist with red sashes, and in their square thickly-wadded caps of crimson velvet, like sofa-cushions, urge on the prodigiously fast trotting horses, at the same time throwing themselves back in their seats with outstretched arms and tightened reins, as though the animals were madly endeavouring to escape from their control. The latter bring with them certain strongly-made wooden boxes, with a seat at the back for two passengers and a perch in front for a driver. These boxes are put upon rails, and called sledges. The bottom of each box (or sledge) is plentifully strewn with hay, which after a few days becomes converted, by means of snow and dirty goloshes, into something very like manure. The driver is immediately in front of you, with his brass badge hanging on his back like the label on a box of sardines. He wears a sheepskin; but it is notorious that after ten years' wear the sheepskin loses its odour, besides which it is winter, so that your sense of smell has really nothing to fear. The one thing necessary is to keep your legs to yourself, or at all events not to obtrude them beneath the perch of the driver, or you will run

* It would be equally correct to speak of the English nobility of the present day as "the barons."

the chance of having your foot crushed by that gentleman's heel. Sometimes the horse is fresh from the plough, and requires a most vigorous application of the driver's thong to induce him to quit his accustomed pace; but for the most part the animals are willing enough, and as rapid as their masters are skilful. The driver is generally much attached to his horse, whom he affectionately styles his "dove" or his "pigeon," assuring him that although the ground is covered with snow, there is still grass in the stable for his *galoùpchik*—as the favourite bird is called—&c., &c.

As for the real pigeons and doves, they are to be found everywhere,—on the belfries of the churches, in the courtyards of the houses, in the streets blocking up the pavement, and above all, beneath the projecting edges of the roofs, where you may see them clustering in long deep lines like black cornices. But the holy bird appears to the greatest advantage in the poulterer's shop, where, conscious of the kind of divinity that hedges a pigeon, he struts about among the carcases of his fellow-flutterers, first examining the breast of a partridge, then devoting his attention to the plumage of a quail, and never fearing for an instant lest the slaughterer of so many of his species should irreligiously lay hands on *his* sacred head.

Aware of the immunity accorded to the pigeon, the gray crow presumes upon a certain distant resemblance to inhabit the same localities, and, thanks to his uneatable nature, is but seldom knocked on the head. Some years since the magpie was also an inhabitant of Moscow, until one day a distinguished metropolitan of the Greek Church undertook the expulsion of the tribe. The "facts" of the affair were briefly as follows:—The metropolitan was about to lay the foundation-stone of a new church, when, at the very moment for applying the mortar, the golden trowel could not be found. A workman who happened to be in the vicinity of the metropolitan, and who enjoyed no very brilliant character for honesty, was sus

pected, accused, sentenced, knouted, and sent to Siberia. But scarcely had the unfortunate man reached Tobolsk, when the trowel was discovered by the bell-ringers at the top of the celebrated tower, or belfry, of Ivan Veliki, whither it had been carried by some magpie, who was evidently acquainted with the plot of *La Gazza Ladra*. Upon this the metropolitan cursed the magpies, as a less virtuous person might have done under the same circumstances; and the birds thus anathematized flew out of Moscow, and have never since ventured within thirty miles of the holy city. In reality the magpies *do* keep at a respectful distance—which of course proves the truth of the whole story.

It will be asked how all the pigeons manage to subsist. In the first place, they are fed by good-natured persons, who are gratified to find their pensioners come regularly every morning for their meals. In this way Kriloff, the Russian fable-writer, is said to have entertained all the pigeons of the Gastinnoi Dvor for a considerable period. Then they have the free run of the poulterer's shop, where they consume a large portion of the corn intended for fowls that are fattening for the knife. Moreover, there are nearly sixty thousand horses* in Moscow during the winter (about one for every five persons), and wherever there are horses there is food to some extent for pigeons.

Among the sixty thousand horses which Moscow is said to possess, a large number are of great beauty; and their elegant heads are seen to the more advantage from the absence of blinkers and the extreme lightness of the harness generally. The rarity of collisions in thoroughfares crowded with sledges, going in every direction, and every one of them at a pace which in Paris would insure the prosecution of the *isvostchik* for "furious driving," is to be attributed as much to the liberty left to the animals of

* Tegoborski, in his work on the "Productive Forces of Russia," tells us that in Moscow the number of horses is equal to 20 per cent. of the population. In St. Petersburg they only represent 7 per cent.; while in Simbirsk they amount to as many as 72 per cent.

using their own eyes as to the skill with which they are guided. Most of the English trainers in Russia now break their horses in to go without blinkers; which, regarded in the light of a decoration, are about as ornamental to the head of a horse as an eye-shade is to that of a man.

Besides the private sledges and the sledges from the country, there are town-sledges of various degrees of excellence, some of which can vie in every respect with the best private ones. You have a comfortable seat, a fashionably-picturesque driver, an excellent fur for your knees, and probably a scarlet net covering the back of the swift white horse, and attached to the front of the sledge so as to guard your face from the lumps of frozen snow which might otherwise be kicked into it. These magnificent *isvostchiks* occupy the same proud position as the Hansom cabmen in London, or the drivers of *remises* in Paris, and look down with deep and openly-expressed contempt on their country-bred competitors, whom they upbraid with the unkempt condition of their horses and the inelegant form of their vehicles. But the rustic driver with his meekness and civility, is not to be spurned. In the words of a touching proverb, "he wears the skin of a sheep, but he has the heart of a man;" and it is astonishing how far he will drive for fourpence.

In Moscow no one thinks of walking during the winter, except perhaps on one of the boulevards, when the weather is particularly fine. In fact, the people are clothed so warmly and so heavily, that to walk any distance is really impossible. Sometimes, it is true, a man may be seen in the depth of winter wearing no fur at all, in which case you may be sure he will understand you if you address him in English. And you may be almost equally certain that he has not been more than a year in Russia; for our countrymen, though they stand the first winter to the admiration or rather the astonishment of every one, generally find it necessary to adopt fur-clothing for the second. Indeed, it is not the mere unpleasantness of cold

which has to be guarded against; it is the danger resulting from the great and sudden change of temperature to which one is exposed, in going out on rather a cold day from a warm room into the open air, or, in other words, from a temperature of 16° (Réaumur) above freezing point to one of 16° below it.*

It appears strange to assert that, in a country where every year men are frozen to death, the accounts of the cold are nevertheless much exaggerated. However, it requires no very low temperature for a human being to freeze to death in it, if he takes care beforehand to get drunk and go to sleep, and does not awake before the warmth produced by the alcohol has left his body. Travellers speak of the cold represented by 30° and 35° Réaumur as if it were nothing extraordinary; but the thermometer does not mark 30° more than once in about twenty years. It appears from the records of the observatory that in seventeen years the average maximum of cold at St. Petersburg was 21$\frac{2}{5}$°; and, in 1840, it is mentioned as an extraordinary fact that the thermometer marked 30° on the 9th of February, 1810. However, at Moscow it rarely happens that the mercury does not descend to 25° for a few days in the winter. Every third or fourth year it sinks to 27° or 28°. At 28° the birds will sometimes fall frozen from the house-tops; and a few years ago, when the thermometer was at 29° and 30°, pigeons were seen to become paralyzed and drop as they were flying through the air. Probably, however, they were half frozen before they took wing, and only did so on being ejected forcibly from their hiding-places.

For a good portable thermometer there is nothing better than a tolerably thick moustache. It will scarcely become stiff from frost at less than 10° (always of Réaumur's thermometer), at 15° it becomes a solid mass, and at 20° you cannot walk twice as many yards without having ice enough on your upper lip for a small sherry-cobbler. I once lived for three minutes and a half in a temperature

* A difference of 72° Fahrenheit.

of 26°. It was about half an hour after sunset, the streets were full of gloom, and I felt as if the cold would dissolve me; whereas, if left to itself, it would of course have hardened me into a solid concrete mass. (Thus a friend of mine saw a man carried with frozen feet from his sledge into a hut by the side of the road; who, by way of showing how completely his toes were icebound, tapped them with his walking-stick, when a hard sound was heard such as would be produced by a similar operation on a piece of marble.) Ladies have their thermometers as well as men. First of all there is the veil, which stiffens with the frozen breath of the wearer at only a few degrees below freezing point; then there is the handkerchief, which, if made of the softest cambric, will in a certain number of seconds harden into something like the coarsest canvas; and lastly, there are the cheeks—and, above all, that celebrated test the nose, which I declare I had almost forgotten. The appearance of the nose, then, is very useful in indicating the exact amount of cold you happen to be suffering to another person; and when it turns white it is a clear proof that it is frost-bitten: but it would be rather difficult to perceive this yourself, and all you can do is to feel it from time to time, if you do not mind making yourself ridiculous in the eyes of the passers by. If you should suddenly discover that your nose has become as hard as stone, you will feel no immediate inconvenience; but unless you begin rubbing it with snow, you will lose it as soon as it thaws. Every one who has read an account of a winter in Russia has met with the great nose anecdote, of which I like M. Alexandre Dumas' telling (in *Le Maitre d'Armes* better than anyone else's. I am not going to say that *I* saw any man run up to any other man in the street, cry out *noss! noss!* and rub his nose with snow. On the contrary, though from the first frost to the last thaw, I was constantly on the look out for that well-known incident of winter-life in Russia, it never occurred in my presence; which is the more mortifying, inasmuch as other tourists have suc-

ceeded in witnessing it who were only a few weeks, and, in some cases, only a few days, in the country.

Of course a very large portion of the population, that is to say, all who are engaged in agriculture, as well as builders, and generally those who labour out of doors, are thrown out of work at the approach of winter. But the change is not, as it would be in other countries, from profitable work to destitution, but merely from one kind of labour to another. All these men have at least two trades, one for the winter and the other for the summer; and doubtless the well-known facility with which the Russian workman varies his occupation may be to some extent accounted for by the inevitable change which takes place in his employment and habits every autumn and every spring By the time the corn has been threshed the streams which turn the water-mills are covered with ice, the soil is frost-bound, and, in the towns, building has become utterly impossible, if only from the fact that a few minutes' exposure to the air would harden the mortar into stone. But the miller will take to weaving, the bricklayer will become a carpenter, the ploughman will turn sledge-driver. Some, as we have seen, will take provisions to the towns, and numbers of peasants will go to work in the factories, which are always unusually brisk during the winter-months, whereas in the summer there is frequently a difficulty in procuring hands. And I have been assured, not by Russians, but by Englishmen from Lancashire, and Frenchmen from Alsace, that the readiness with which the Russian *moujik* adapts himself to any kind of work, whether spinning, weaving, printing, or even machine-engraving, is marvellous.

There are certain callings also which belong exclusively to the winter. For instance, there is the sweep, whose occupation is entirely gone with the frost. Fortunately, however, the sweep can work with the spade as well as with the broom. Then there is the extra *dvornik*, or porter, who sits outside the *porte-cochère* in his capacious

sheepskin (like a garment of tripe), while his fellow-*dvórnik* is warming himself indoors, or *vice versâ*. In summer one *dvornik* suffices, but the extra *dvornik* is luckily an excellent gardener. Speaking of gardeners, what a curious spectacle a procession of "frozen-out gardeners," such as is sometimes seen in England, would be to a Russian! Probably it would lead him to reflect on the disadvantages of a temperate climate, where, thanks to the entire absence of precautions, we suffer more from heat than in India, and more from cold than in Siberia.

But to return to the alternating system in Russia. It has one great advantage there,—that of abolishing the "slack season," the period of *chômage*, during which the workman in France and England is frequently reduced to the position of a pauper. It also appears to relieve labour of a certain portion of its drudgery; the toil becomes less mechanical, and with each change of occupation a certain amount of energy is developed. Of course an excess of variety would render some kinds of skilled labour impossible, on the principle that "Jack-of-all-trades is master of none;" and, if carried beyond a certain point, might be the means of turning a nation of industrious men into a horde of vagabonds. But there is no reason why a labourer should be either a mere townsman or a mere rustic; and the union of city occupations with those of the country might be expected—other things being equal—to give a certain superiority to the working classes of Russia over those of other nations.

Doubtless the sight is not benefited by the perpetual white, slightly relieved in the towns by the swarms of dark-blue pigeons on the house-tops, and the gray dust of the great thoroughfares, when neither a thaw nor a snow-storm has recently taken place, and when the frozen mud and snow have been pounded and ground into a gravelly powder by the hoofs of the horses, and the iron-bound rails of the sledges. But as far as the pleasures of the

eye are concerned, it may be said that the snow of a Russian winter is less disagreeable than the black mud, the gray mist, and the dirty yellow fog of the same season in Great Britain. At home we associate snow with darkness and gloom; but, when once the snow has fallen, the sky of Moscow is as bright and as blue as that of Italy; the atmosphere is clear and pure; the sun shines for several hours in the day with a brightness from which the reflection of the snow becomes perfectly dazzling; and if the frost be intense, there is not a breath of wind. The breath that really does attract your notice is that of the pedestrians, who appear to be blowing forth columns of smoke or steam into the rarefied atmosphere, and who look like so many walking chimneys or human locomotives. And if breath looks like smoke, smoke itself looks almost solid. Rise early, when the fires are being lighted which are to heat the stoves through the entire day, and if the thermometer outside your window marks more than 15°, you will see the gray columns rising heavily into the air, until at a certain height the smoke remains stationary, and hangs in clouds above the houses. Looking from some great elevation, such as the tower of Ivan Veliki in the Kremlin, you see these clouds beneath you, agitated like waves, and forming a kind of nebulous sea, which is, however, soon taken up by the surrounding atmosphere.

It is astonishing how much cold one can support when the sky is bright and the sun shining; certainly ten or fifteen degrees more, by Reaumur's thermometer, than when the day is dark and gloomy. And the effect is the same on all. On one of these fine frosty days there is unwonted cheerfulness in the look, unwonted energy in the movements of every one you meet. If there were the slightest wind with so keen a temperature, you would feel, every time it grazed your face, as if you were being shaved with a blunt razor,—for to be cut with a sharp one is comparatively nothing. But the air is calm; and

as the day exhilarates you generally, it makes you walk more briskly than you are in the habit of doing in your *shouba* of cloth, wadding, and fur; and the result is, you are so warm and so surrounded by sunshine, that, but for *seeing* the cold, you might fancy yourself on the shores of the Mediterranean instead of on the banks of the Moskva, which is now a long, shiny, serpent-like path of ice. In London, on a damp, foggy, sunless winter's day, when the thermometer is not quite down to freezing-point, the system is so depressed by the atmosphere and the cheerless aspect of the streets, that you feel the cold more acutely than you would do on a sunshiny morning in Moscow with ten degrees of frost. In St. Petersburg, where the winter sun is, "as in northern climes, but dimly bright," and where the city is frequently enveloped in a mist (which is, however, ethereal vapour compared to the opaque fogs of London), the cold is, on the same principle, more severely felt than in Moscow. Nevertheless, in St. Petersburg people go about far more lightly clad than in the more southern towns of the empire,—for St. Petersburg is half a foreign city, and the numerous pedestrians have found it necessary to reject the ponderous *shouba* for a long wadded *paletot* with a fur-collar. The real Russian *shouba* is undoubtedly very warm; for it enables the Moscow merchant to go upon 'Change, which in the old capital, during the coldest weather, is held in the open air, but, as the reader has been already informed, it is almost impossible to walk in it.

In considering the advantages and disadvantages of a Russian winter, we should not forget the question of rain. It is evident, then, that where there is frost there can be no rain; and accordingly, for nearly six months in the year, you can dispense altogether with that most unpleasant encumbrance, the umbrella. For it must be remembered that in Russia the snow does not fall in the soft feathery flakes to which we are accustomed in more temperate latitudes. It comes down in showers of microscopic

darts, which, instead of intercepting the light of the sun, like the arrows of Xerxes' army, glitter and sparkle in its rays as they reflect them in every direction. The minute crystals, or rather crystalline fragments, can be at once shaken from the collars of fur, on the points of which they hang like needles, but above all like Epsom salts; and on the cloth of the men's *shoubas* and the satin of the women's cloaks they have scarcely any hold.

The most pleasant time of the whole winter is during the moonlight nights, when the wind is still and the snow deep on the ground. In the streets the sparkling *trottoir*, which appears literally paved with diamonds, is as hard as the agate floor of the Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Kremlin. In the country, where alone you can enjoy the night in all its beauty, the frozen surface crunches, but scarcely sinks, beneath the sledge, as your *troika* tears along the road as fast as the centre horse can trot and the two outsiders gallop. For it is a peculiarity of the *troika* that the three horses which constitute it are harnessed abreast; and that while the one in the shafts, whose head is upheld by a bow, with a little bell suspended from the top, is trained to trot, and never to leave that pace, however fast he may be driven, the two who are harnessed outside must gallop, even if they gallop but six miles an hour; though I must admit that they are far more likely to be called upon to do twelve. Lastly, the *troika* must present a fan-like front; to produce which the driver tightens the outside reins till the heads of the outriggers stand out at an angle of forty or fifty degrees from that of the horse in the shafts. At the same time the centre horse trots with his head high in the air, while the two whose existences are devoted to galloping have their noses depressed towards the ground, like bulls running at a dog.

There may be enough moonlight to read by when the moon itself is obscured by clouds; but when it shines directly on the white ermine-like snow, which covers the

vast plains like an interminable carpet, the atmosphere becomes full of light, and the night in its brightness, its solitude, and its silence, broken only by the bells of some distant team, reminds you of the calmness of an unusually quiet and beautiful day. As you turn away from the main road towards the woods, you pass groups of tall slender birch-trees, with their white silvery bark, and their delicate thread-like fibres hanging in frozen showers from the ends of the branches, and clothing the birch with a kind of icy foliage, while the other trees remain bare and ragged. The birch is eminently a winter tree, and its tresses of fibres, whether petrified and covered with crystals by the frost, or waving freely in the breeze which has stripped them of their snow, are equally ornamental. The ground is strewed with the shadows of the trees, traced with exquisite fineness on the white snow, from which these lunar photographs stand forth with wonderful distinctness. To drive out with an indefinite number of *troikas* to some village in the environs, or to the first station on one of the Government roads, is a common mode of spending a fine winter's night, and one which is equally popular in Moscow and St. Petersburg. These excursions, which always partake more or less of the nature of a picnic, form one of the chief pleasures of the cold season. Of course such expeditions also take place during the day, but, whatever the hour of the departure, if there happen to be a moon that night, the return is sure not to take place before it has made its appearance.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIRE AND WATER.

In Moscow, besides the merchant in the *traktir*, who, active as he may be in business, is too indolent to cut up his own *pirog* or light his own pipe; the *moujik*, who, not only in his devotions, but in the presence of any superior from whom he has much to fear or to hope, executes a genuine *salaam*; the watchman, who in the Oriental style guards the house; and the pigeons, who enjoy a special protection utterly denied to them in the West, we find traces of the East, or at least that which recalls it, in the watch-towers of the city (with which the fire-brigades are connected), and above all in the bath-houses, of which, as of the enormous traktirs, or tea-houses, there are but few good specimens to be found in St. Petersburg.

The reader must allow me to take a bath, and to see a fire, in his company.

The Russians in their ablutions have a preference for running streams over pools. This is noticeable, not only in the bathing, but in the ordinary mode of washing the hands and face in Russia. A Russian does not wash his hands in a basin, but holds them over a basin, and soaps them and rubs them together while his servant pours water over them. At present this is only a custom, but, like other customs, there must be a reason for its existence, and whether or not it is borrowed from the East (which it appears to be), it probably originates in a notion that the water, if the hands require washing at all, must become impure at the moment of contact. In the same way a person immersing himself in a bath must, by so doing, even if he has bathed only a few hours before, to some extent sully the water. To get into a series of

baths would involve some trouble, and to avoid this inconvenience the Orientals (and after them the Russians) achieve the desired end by a truly Mahometan alternative: as they cannot throw themselves into a series of baths, they cause a series of baths to be thrown over them.

In Russian bath-houses of the best class there are public and private compartments (in those for working people there is only one general washing-place). A stranger may object to ablution in public—not, however, that he will be soused in the immediate vicinity of any one else; but, on the other hand, knowing nothing of the language, he may fear that in private the attendant will boil him or stifle him beyond the hope of remedy. The Russians think no more of bathing in a general lavatory than of dining at a *table d'hôte*, though at baths, as at *restaurants*, some have their private rooms.

We will imagine ourselves, then, in the general dressing and undressing room—a large apartment with divans on every side. One or two men, newly drenched and scrubbed, are reclining on sofas, arrayed in gorgeous dressing-gowns (apparently provided by the establishment), smoking chibouks, and, perhaps, drinking tea. One or two more are undressing. About *that* process there can be no mistake. The stranger knows that he must begin by taking his clothes off. On one side of the room with the divans is an arch, through which is perceived a suite of utterly unfurnished apartments, paved with large slabs, and resembling a succession of sculleries or a capacious slaughter-house. From these hot fumes proceed; and in the distance stands a naked victim with ensanguined skin, over whose tortured body a ruthless executioner is pouring buckets of water, which, from the steam it sends forth, must burn like liquid fire. But you are undressed, and must go through the ordeal.

You are received in the first scullery (let us call it nothing worse), or, if you hesitate, are led thereto by an attendant attired in the court costume of the King of the

Cannibal Islands, *minus* the cocked hat and the white kid gloves, which, we must add, for the benefit of the uninformed, were the only articles of dress worn by that monarch on state occasions. But no, the attendant has a cross round his neck. In other respects he is less clothed even than the models at the Government Academy of Paintings, who are not permitted by the paternal Minister of Fine Arts to appear in a state of utter nudity.

You have no occasion to speak. Indeed, the best thing you can do is to shut your mouth, for the attendant is about to throw a bucket of water at you. He throws it—it is tepid; then another, which is warmer; then another, which is much warmer; and so on *crescendo*, until it gets near boiling point. In the meanwhile, in the intervals of the ducking, but not until you have been thoroughly saturated with water, the *chelavek* (*garçon*) who has taken you in hand has laid you down on a bench, like a stuck pig about to be scraped, and, with a handful of matting impregnated with soap, has rubbed you all over from head to foot, carefully, scrutinizingly, without neglecting a crevice or a corner, even to the innermost recesses of your ears. We said from head to foot, and, in fact, the *chelavek* will so lather, and rub, and *scratch* your head, that you can scarcely help laughing at the absurdity of such a proceeding, and will so tickle the soles of your feet that you with difficulty avoid kicking out at him.

And now the blood begins to flow (but only internally—there are no wounds), and you feel confidence in your *chelavek*, who, without leaving you any time for repose on your bench, motions to you to get up that he may throw water at you again. He gives it you hot and hot, over the head, into the eyes, down the back, and then asks you whether you have had enough, or whether you have not had enough, and would like something hotter? You reply at random, "*niet*" (no) or "*da*" (yes), without knowing exactly what the fellow means; or you leave him to himself, in which case he will probably treat you to a bucket at something

over 100° Fahrenheit, and lead you to the inner room, if he has not already conducted you there, and then to a hotter one still; and, finally, if you will let him, to an innermost of all, where you will observe a flight of steps leading to a platform near the ceiling.

If you seem to take kindly to the scrubbing and scalding, the *chelavek* will propose that you should go upstairs to the fiery furnace; but this is an offer more frequently made than accepted—at least, by novices. The pavement and walls of all the bathing-rooms are heated; and in the last of the suite the heat is so great, that, without preparation, and without the exposure of the skin to the atmosphere, and the perspiration caused by the washing and rubbing, it would be impossible to bear it. Whether the *inferno* at the top of the staircase is rendered still hotter by the immediate vicinity of a stove in the wall, or whether the excessive warmth of the temperature can be accounted for solely by the rising of the hot air and the vapour which hangs in clouds from the ceiling, one thing is certain, that to lie on that platform is, as far as one can imagine the situation, like lying in an oven. We tried it, and in a few seconds felt that we were roasting,—or, at all events, stewing. The ordinary temperature on the platform (we quote from a good authority) is 126° Fahrenheit—a heat which suffices to melt sealing-wax. It is true that it also melts human beings, that is to say, it makes them perspire most profusely; but it does not make their blood simmer, or cause them to break the smallest blood-vessel. On the contrary, it does a certain amount of good. Thus the Russian bath, taken thoroughly, is said to cure rheumatism, several forms of neuralgia, and a variety of other acute diseases.

But the reader must not be left on the platform, on descending from which he will be received by the *chelavek* with a salute of several pails, descending from hot to cold, but *not* terminating, as some will have it, with iced water. Neither is the bather—or rather the bathed one—expected

at the conclusion of his ordeal to cool his precious body in snow. These pretty contrasts have been invented, though we believe that it is quite true that in summer—when only it would be possible—the peasants, after their ordinary bath, sometimes take a swim in the nearest river.

The Russian bath, which opens every pore in the skin, produces a delightful glow, accompanied, however, by a certain amount of languor. On the whole, it is wonderfully refreshing, and after any great fatigue is quite revivifying. It is impossible not to recognize a person who has just returned from the bath. It gives a colour to the palest, and is like a fountain of youth to those who are no longer young. But this is only for a few hours afterwards. The next day the pale are paler than ever, and those who ordinarily have a colour have lost some of it. The skin has contracted; and the pinched-up, colourless, tanned sort of look, which is observable in many Russians, both among the women and the men, is doubtless to be attributed as much to the baths as to the variations of climate and to the severity of the winter.

If we return once more to the bath-room, where the *chelavek* will have offered us some sort of robe to wrap ourselves in, and a long pipe to smoke, we must not forget that when the ordinary payment is made to the proprietor something is due to the *chelavek* himself; "*na chai*," to use his own expression. Hearing those words for the first time in a bath-room the evening of my arrival in Moscow. I naturally did not understand them in the least; and when the attendant, by way of making his meaning clearer, held a teacup before my astonished eyes, I came to the conclusion that he was anxious I should have some tea, and signified my willingness in that respect. But my aquarius wanted "tea-money," in which form all gratuities to servants in Russia are given.

From water to fire the transition is abrupt, but fire breaks out when it is least expected, and we must say a few words about the Russian fire service. In Moscow (and the

same system is observed in St. Petersburg and all the large cities), there are twelve police "quarters," each of which is superintended, and its inhabitants plundered whenever they require, or perhaps do not require, his services, by a *qvartalny*, otherwise known as a major of police. Each "quarter" has a station, from the centre of which rises a lofty watch-tower, so conspicuous that its summit—a circular platform—can be seen from every part of the town. One or more members of the police are always stationed on these platforms, and if there is any disturbance in the streets they will perhaps call attention to it; but their chief duty is to watch for fires. As soon as a fire breaks out the first watchman who discovers it hoists on a flagstaff, fixed in the tower for that purpose, a certain combination of balls, indicating the "quarter" in which the conflagration has been observed. The signal is repeated by all the other watchmen; and as a complete system of fire-signals is exhibited outside every police-station, all Moscow knows before long what houses are likely to be in danger. The balls remain on the flagstaff until the flames have been extinguished, and at night, instead of the balls, the signal is composed of coloured lamps. The system would be admirable if it were well followed up, and if the fire-brigades were nearly as useful as they are active and courageous. At the first news of fire, the General-Governor, or the Emperor, if he happen to be in Moscow, hastens to the spot, where the nearest firemen, who have excellent horses and gallop along the streets at a furious pace, have doubtless already arrived. A Russian fire-train with its outriders, and its artillery-like equipages, each drawn by a *troika*,* is a picturesque sight, and has an imposing and even a business-like look, when the men are hurrying to a fire, and you do not precisely know what they are going to do when they get there, nor what they are carrying with them. Every one seems to know what he is about, and no time is lost. But when they have reached

* Three horses harnessed abreast.

the scene of action, and have "unlimbered" (so to say), we find that they are so many men in armour, who have brought with them a few casks of water and some squirts. The squirts (for they are nothing more) would doubtless have frightened M. de Pourceaugnac into fits; but for extinguishing fires they are of less avail even than our own ineffective parish engines. In one of the by-streets of Moscow, where the houses are nearly all built of wood, roofed in with sheet-iron, I watched from the top of a neighbouring building several companies of firemen endeavouring to extinguish a fire, which had already consumed one dwelling, and threatened to spread much further than "next door," for the wind was blowing live embers in all directions. The firemen, armed with their never-failing hatchets (with which, if necessary, they will cut a house to pieces to save the adjacent ones), got on to the roof of one of the burning houses, rolled up the sheet-iron like a sheet of paper, and in exact proportion as they uncovered the building exposed themselves to the flames beneath, which rose as they were fed by the external air. But other firemen came up, mounted their ladders, and crowded round the open roof in such numbers, and squirted so vigorously, and threw so many buckets of water on to the flames, that they actually *did* put them out. Only, if they had had serviceable engines, they would have done the work with less risk, greater certainty, and in half the time.

The neighbours assuredly had not much faith in the speedy extinction of the fire, for, at a distance of several houses, many of them had already begun to place their valuables in carts which stood at the safe end of the street.

It was interesting to see what these valuables were. The first things saved seem to be the holy images, and next to them the fur-cloaks, which, when the fur is costly and the family is poor, are handed down from generation to generation.

CHAPTER XVII.

EATING AND DRINKING.

"TELL me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are," says the facetious author of the *Physiologie du Goût.* I will tell my readers what the Russians eat; and if among them there should happen to be some Brillat Savarin—why, perhaps he will be able to do what no one else has done, and tell us what they are.

In the old times the Russians lived with great simplicity, and the luxurious existence for which the Russian nobles were celebrated in the eighteenth century does not appear to have been known until after the changes introduced by Peter the Great. Prince Shcherbatoff, a strange specimen of a Russian Conservative, who looks upon all the reforms of Peter as unmitigated evils, devotes several pages, in a book published during Catherine's reign, to an account of the daily life of the old Tzars. It appears to me that those sovereigns lived as luxuriously as the state of the culinary art would permit; but the Prince tells us that their table, though supplied with patriarchal abundance, was at the same time distinguished by patriarchal simplicity. He is not quite sure, he tells us, that the old Tzars did not eat off silver sometimes; but he is quite certain that in all the Moscow Treasury (in the Kremlin) there is not one respectable silver dinner-service. He might have added, however, that the Moscow Treasury contains an abundance of plates, dishes, and spoons of gold. They are rudely fashioned, it is true, and, in fact, are made after the model of the wooden platters and spoons of the peasantry, of which the form has not varied for centuries; but they are not the less costly for that. The Prince also praises the simplicity of the Tzarish table. He

admits that the Court ate beef, mutton, pork, turkeys, ducks, Russian fowls, game, and pigs, with the addition of a quantity of pastry; but adds, that the latter was not always made of the best flour. Capons and milk-fed calves had never been heard of; and the greatest culinary luxury of the period was a piece of roast meat or ham, garnished with gold paper. Neither capers, nor olives, nor any of the other incentives to eating, were known; but the Russians *did* know and partake of salted cucumbers, salted plums, and, on great occasions, the jelly of meat, accompanied by salted lemons. As for fish, they scarcely ever tasted it. The merchants had very few "preserve-ponds," and the art of bringing fish alive from distant parts was not yet known. When the Emperor went to Moscow, he usually contented himself with such fish as could be caught in the Moscow river; but there were also artificial ponds in the neighbourhood of the holy city, which were laid under contribution in times of scarcity; and in winter salted and frozen fish were sent to the Tzar from all parts. The dessert was also of the most simple character. It consisted of raisins, currants, figs, prunes, and *pāstilla;** or, in the summer, of apples, pears, *peas, beans, and cucumbers.* The Prince is of opinion that melons and water-melons were seldom heard of, except those (the finest of all, by the way) that were sent to Moscow from Astrakhan. In the matter of drink the Russian Tzars were not at all particular. In addition to *kvass kisla shchee,* beer, *votka,* and different kinds of mead, they took nothing except the ordinary red wine and "Rhine wine"—a generic term, in which were included not only the wines of Germany, but also those of France, Portugal, and the Mediterranean. Nevertheless Prince Shcherbatoff admits that, on grand occasions, the Russian Emperor made as much display as possible; and M. Gerebtzoff, the author of a recently-published work on "Civili-

* A composition of fruit and honey, corresponding (according to Dr. Guthrie) to the *pastillum* of the Romans.

zation in Russia," tells us that the ordinary dinner of the ancient Tzars consisted of sixty or seventy different dishes, which they contented themselves with tasting, but which etiquette required them to have on the table. When the Earl of Carlisle dined with the Tzar five hundred dishes were served. At that period the Russian cooks (according to Gerebtzoff) distinguished themselves by their ingenuity in giving everything they prepared the form of something else. Thus fish were served up in the shape of lions or peacocks, or of hens and chickens; and the only kind that were allowed to appear as nature had made them were those of enormous size. Tanner, in his "Travels in Russia," written in the sixteenth century, says that he was present at a dinner where half a fish was brought in which it was as much as three men could do to carry. But it was especially in the preparation of the dessert that the Russian cooks exhibited their sculptural talents. Thus they made colossal figures of animals and models of towns in sugar; and we read that on the occasion of Peter the Great's birth the Tzar Alexis gave a dinner, of which the dessert included the following pieces of confectionery :— 1. A salver in sugar, with the arms of Moscow; 2. A salver in cinnamon sugar; 3. An enormous head in sugar, weighing a hundred pounds; 4. A large eagle moulded in white sugar, with the Imperial arms, weighing sixty pounds; 5. Another eagle, similar in form, but made of red sugar; 6. A swan in white sugar, weighing eighty pounds; 7. A duck in white sugar, weighing twenty pounds; 8. A parrot in sugar, weighing twenty pounds; 9. A dove in sugar, weighing eight pounds; 10. The Kremlin in sugar, with men on horseback and pedestrians; 11. A large tower with an eagle, and another like it but not so large; 12. A fortified town with cannons; 13. Two trumpets in cinnamon sugar, one white and the other red. There were also pyramids of cakes, belfries of sugar-candy, forty dishes of human faces in sugar, thirty dishes of sugar-candy representing various vegetables, ten dishes of spiced

sugar, a hundred and fifty dishes of dried and preserved fruit, melons, water-melons, &c. Gingerbread, which at present enjoys no better reputation in Russia than in England, was at that time in great favour. It is probably the most ancient species of confectionery known in the country. The Russians, before their conversion to Christianity, used to make offerings of gingerbread to their pagan deities; and at all times they seem to have been in the habit of moulding it into the forms of animals and edifices. There can be no doubt as to the truth of Prince Shcherbatoff's assertion, that before the time of Peter luxury was comparatively unknown in Russia; for it must be remembered that we have hitherto been speaking of the Tzar's table alone. The boyards are said to have lived with extreme simplicity; and it was not until Peter the Great introduced Western manners, and enforced the presence of his nobles at the Court, that they acquired those disastrous habits of expenditure for which they were so long notorious, and which seem to have led to that great misery of serfdom—the grinding down of serfs through stewards by absentee proprietors. In Catherine's reign Archdeacon Coxe, the Duke of Marlborough's chaplain (and afterwards his biographer), visited Russia, and was surprised at the magnificence with which the nobles lived. In spite of all the changes that have taken place since that time, the best account I have ever read of a Russian dinner, such as I remember it only the other day, is the one given by the Archdeacon in his still valuable volumes. In the first place, we are told that "the tables were served with great profusion and taste," and the English traveller found, that though the Russians had adopted the delicacies of French cookery, they "neither affected to despise their native dishes nor squeamishly rejected the solid joints which characterized our repasts." The plainest as well as the choicest viands had been collected from the most distant quarters, and at the same time were to be seen sterlet from the Volga, veal from Archangel, mutton from Astra-

khan, beef from the Ukraine, and pheasants from Hungary and Bohemia. The common wines were claret, burgundy, and champagne; "and," says Archdeacon Coxe, "I never tasted English beer and porter in greater perfection and abundance." Before dinner—as in the present day—a small table was spread in a corner of the room, covered with plates of caviare, dried and pickled herrings, smoked ham and tongue, bread, butter, and cheese, together with bottles of different *liqueurs;* and few of the company of either sex omitted the prelude to the main entertainment. "This practice," says the observant and facetious traveller, "has induced many travellers to relate that the Russians swallow bowls of brandy before dinner;" an absurdity which subsequent travellers have repeated, and which had great success with "the general reader" during the war. The Marquis de Custine, who seems to have aimed at originality in his errors, says, in his very voluminous and untruthful account of his celebrated six-weeks' tour, that many persons dine at the side-table before the real dinner commences. The fact, however, is, that the pieces of caviare, salted fish, cheese, &c., are about half the size of a die, and nobody takes more than one; indeed, in the present day, ladies take none at all: nor is the *zakouska* (as the preliminary entertainment is called) usually served at small family dinners. "What are the usages of the vulgar," continues Archdeacon Coxe, "in this particular (that of drinking before dinner), I cannot determine; but among the nobility I never observed the least violation of the most extreme sobriety; and this custom of taking *liqueur* before dinner, considering the extreme smallness of the glasses used on the occasion, is a very innocent refreshment, and will not convey the faintest idea of excess. Indeed, the Russians in no other wise differ from the French in this instance, than that they taste a glass of *liqueur* before their repast, while the latter defer it till after dinner."

Dr. Matthew Guthrie, physician to the Empress Catherine, in his interesting and learned dissertation on Russian

antiquities, aims at showing that the Russians are—not descended from the Greeks, but of the same origin with that nation; and this he attempts to prove by establishing the identity of certain Russian customs with those of the ancient Hellenes, or of the Romans, as borrowed from them. He shows that the musical instruments are the same; that there is a wonderful similarity as to construction between the two languages; that many remarkable superstitions and semi-religious practices (as, for instance, at marriage festivals), which belong to Russia, belonged also to Greece; that the candles or torches of pine-wood found in the peasants' huts were used by the Greeks, and also the Russian stove or *peitchka* (λαμπτηρ). The knout corresponds with the *tumpanismos* and *taurea* of the ancients; the *shchott*, or calculating machine, still used by all the Russian merchants and peasants, is the Latin *abacus;* the *croupa*, or meal given to the Russian soldiers when they are on a campaign, and which they make into cakes and into soup, is the Greek αλφιτον; the peculiar Russian soup called *batvinia* is the μιττωτον or black broth of the Spartans; *kvass*, the national drink, is the *posca* or *sera* of the Romans; the Russian sweetmeat *pastilla* is the Latin *pastillum;* the *bokall*, or *koub* (corresponding to our "loving cup"), is the ancient *amystis;* and the custom of sending it round the table is the classical *propinatio;* lastly, to end where we perhaps should have begun, the *zakouska* is the προδειπνον of the Greeks, and the *antecœnium* or *gustatio* of the Romans. "In that of the ancients," says Guthrie, "beetroot, cheese, and oysters were served; in the Russian *gustatio* the same things are served with the exception of the oysters, which are replaced by salt fish and a glass of liqueur, which the climate renders more necessary in the North than in Greece or at Rome." With regard to this alleged necessity to drink spirits in the North some doubts may be entertained, as the Russians in travelling, when they are exposed to the greatest amount of cold, generally take nothing but tea; and we know that

many of the Russian doctors consider the *zakouska* unhealthy, and advise its discontinuance. Without going back to Greece or Rome, it will occur to some of our readers that the dram before dinner is not unknown in England, and that in the same way *vermuth* and *absinthe* are taken in various parts of the Continent.

During the discussion of the "dinner question" in the "Times," one of the correspondents described what he considered a model repast, of which the final dish—coming after the sweets—was "caviare on buttered toast!" * It is a fact that many persons in England take caviare with cheese at the conclusion of dinner, but they might as well take a red herring—a strange thing, it will be admitted, after jellies and tarts. Excellent in its proper place, caviare is an absurdity between sweets and dessert. A Russian would not commit a greater piece of barbarism in commencing his dinner (under the impression that he was dining in the English style) with a piece of plum-pudding.

The essential point in the service of the Russian dinner, of which we have heard so much lately, is, that the dishes should be handed round instead of being placed on the table, which is covered throughout the meal with flowers, fruit, and the whole of the dessert. One advantage of this plan is, that it makes the dinner-table look well; another, that it renders the service more rapid, and saves much trouble to the host. The dishes are brought in one by one; or two at a time, and of the same kind, if a large number are dining. The ordinary wines are on the table, and nothing has to be changed except the plates. At the end of dinner, as the cloth is not removed, the dessert is ready served; and this has always been one of the great glories of a Russian banquet.

To return to Archdeacon Coxe: "I was particularly struck," says that traveller, "with the quantity and quality of the fruit which made its appearance in the dessert. Pines, peaches, apricots, grapes, pears, and cher-

* "G. H. M." has since learned how to eat caviare at Moscow.

ries, none of which can in this country be obtained without the assistance of hot-houses,* were served," he tells us, "in the greatest profusion. There was a delicious species of small melon, which had been sent by land-carriage from Astrakhan to Moscow—a distance of a thousand miles. These melons," he adds, "sometimes cost five pounds apiece, and at other times may be purchased in the markets of Moscow for less than half a crown apiece." One "instance of elegance" which distinguished the dessert, and which appears to have made an impression on the Archdeacon, is then mentioned. "At the upper and lower end of the table were placed two china vases, containing cherry-trees in full leaf, and fruit hanging on the boughs which was gathered by the company." This cherry-tree is also a favourite, and certainly a very agreeable ornament, in the present day. At the conclusion of the dessert coffee is served as in France and England. Men and women leave the table together, and after dinner no wine is taken. Later in the evening tea is brought in, with biscuits, cakes, and preserved fruit.

The reception-rooms in Russian houses are all *en suite;* and instead of doors, you pass from room to room through arches hung with curtains. The number of the apartments in most of the houses I saw varied from three to six or seven, but in the clubs and in large mansions there are more. Grace before or after dinner is never said under any circumstances, but all the guests make the sign of the cross before sitting down to table, usually looking at the same time towards the eastern corner of the room, where the holy image hangs. This ceremony is never omitted in families, though in the early part of the century, when the Gallomania was at its height, it is said to have been much neglected. In club dinners, when men are dining alone, it will be easily believed that the same importance is not attached to it; but the custom may be described

* That is to say, not in the winter. In the summer, pears and cherries abound in Moscow, and every kind of fruit ripens in the south.

as almost universal among the rich, and quite universal among the poor. Indeed, a peasant or a workman would not on any account eat without first making the sign of the cross. In Russia, with its "patriarchal" society (as the Russians are fond of saying), it is usual to thank the lady of the house, either by word or gesture, after dining at her table; and those who are sufficiently intimate kiss her hand.

We now come to the composition of the Russian dinners, and here we must repeat with Archdeacon Coxe, that although the Russians have adopted many of the delicacies of French cookery, they "neither affect to despise their native dishes nor squeamishly reject the solid joints which characterize our own repasts." I was astonished at one Russian dinner, which I was assured was thoroughly national in style, to meet with the homely roast leg of mutton and baked potatoes of my native land. Like the English, the Russians take potatoes with nearly every dish —either plain boiled, fried, or with parsley and butter over them. Plum-pudding, too, and boiled rice-pudding with currants in it, and with melted butter, are known in Russia—at all events, in Moscow and St. Petersburg; and goose is not considered complete without apple-sauce. As in France, every dinner begins with soup; but this custom has not been borrowed from the French. It seems to date from time immemorial, for all the Russian peasants—a thoroughly stationary class—take their soup daily. The Russians are very successful with some kind of pickles, such as salted cucumbers and mushrooms; and they excel in salads, composed not only of lettuce, endive, and beetroot, but also of cherries, grapes, and other fruits, preserved in vinegar. The fruit is always placed at the top, and has a very picturesque effect in the midst of the green leaves. Altogether it may be said that the Russian *cuisine* is founded on a system of eclecticism, with a large number of national dishes for its base. Of course in some Russian houses, as in some English ones, the cooking is

nearly all in the French style; but even then there are always a few dishes on the table that might easily be recognized as belonging to the country. We need scarcely remark, that only very rich persons dine every day in the sumptuous style described by Archdeacon Coxe, though the rule as to service may be said to be general—one dish at a time, and nothing on the table but flowers and the dessert. In the winter, when it is difficult and expensive to get dessert, those who are rich send for it where it *can* be obtained—perhaps to their own hothouses; and those who are not rich, as in other countries, go without. At the *traktirs*, or *restaurants*, the usual dinner supplied for three-quarters of a rouble (half a crown) consists of soup, with a pie of mince-meat, or minced vegetables, an *entrée*, roast meat, and some kind of sweet. That, too, may be considered the kind of dinner which persons of moderate means have every day at home. Rich proprietors, who keep a head cook, a roaster, a pastrycook, and two or three assistant cooks, would perhaps despise so moderate a repast; but from a little manual of cookery which a friend has been kind enough to send me from Russia, it would appear that the generality of persons do not have more than four dishes at each meal.

This cookery-book is entitled "Forty-two Dinners" (thirty for ordinary days and twelve for fast-days), and bears the following not very promising epigraph in the French language:—"We must not consider what we eat, but with whom we eat." Nevertheless, the work has a good reputation, and its contents are certainly arranged on an excellent plan. Instead of the usual confused list of soups, hashes, and stews, the author publishes so many prospectuses of complete dinners, which are printed like the programmes in the newspaper notices of the Philharmonic and other important concerts—but with this difference, that the musical accounts are analytic, and occasionally imperfect, whereas the culinary ones are synthetic, and thoroughly complete. Each dinner consists of four dishes,

inclusive of soup and exclusive of dessert; and each dish is marked *a*, *b*, *c*, or *d*, according to its place in the dinatorial sequence. Beneath each programme are separate directions for the preparations of dishes *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, and each of the forty-two dinners differs from all the others in every item, not even the same soup occurring twice throughout the work. The author evidently belongs to the school of Brillat Savarin in this respect—that he does not believe in the general capacity of mankind to arrange a dinner. He issues his bills of fare like so many imperial *oukazes*. He has spoken. What he has written, he has written. You must not ask him why this dish must necessarily follow that one. He so wills it: *sit pro ratione voluntas*. There is not even an index to the work, so convinced is the author of the necessity of not making the slightest change in his arrangements—as, for instance, by substituting one soup or one kind of fish for another in a dinner. He has told us with true Russian irony that it is not necessary to consider what we eat, but with whom we eat; in other words, if we are going to dine with him, we must accept what he chooses to set down before us. We will select from this learned and authoritative work four dinners, which we have chosen principally because each of them commences with a thoroughly national and decidedly peculiar soup:—

SECOND DINNER.

a. Green borsch with beef and eggs.
b. Salt beef with sour-cream and horseradish.
c. Cutlets of mincemeat with pickles (*pickuli.*)
d. Almond rings.

(*a.*) "Boil separately a piece of beef and some greens, either spinach, sorrel, or the leaves of beetroot. Rub the greens through a sieve, and put them into the beef-broth, which must also previously have been passed through a sieve. Add pepper and salt. Boil and let simmer. Then boil some eggs hard, cut them into pieces, and put them into the *borsch*."

In *b* the horseradish and sour-cream are made into a sauce, and poured over the beef, which is cut in slices. The mincemeat cutlets (*c*) are made out of beef or pork chopped very fine, and mixed with bread-crumbs, egg, and spice. Before frying, a small bone is usually stuck into the "cutlet" by the ingenious cook, who is, however, at liberty to give any shape he pleases to the composition. The almond rings (*d*) are made of almonds, white of egg, and sugar.

FOURTH DINNER.

a. Shchee.

b. Croquettes with *purée* of beetroot.

c. Beef in the hussar style, served with salad of baked beetroot.

d. Biscuits.

Shchee (*a*) is made out of beef, cabbage, parsley, carrots, salt and "English pepper;" and is the most thoroughly national of all the Russian soups. Peasants, soldiers, merchants, and nobles eat this soup. Indeed, the peasant seldom takes any other, though there is frequently this important difference between his *shchee* and that of his betters —in the former, the important item of beef is omitted. However, at the Moscow "fabrics," of which I visited about a dozen, the daily food of the workmen was very good, consisting of *shchee* with beef in it, black bread and *casha* (the meal of buck-wheat) moistened with oil. We may here remark, that black bread is eaten by all classes, particularly with the *shchee:* even in the best houses white and black, or white and brown, bread are put together on the table. Of the "croquettes" (*b*) we need say nothing. Beef is arranged in the hussar style (*c*), by being stuffed with onions and fried in butter, vinegar being poured over it during the operation of frying. The "biscuits" (*d*) are made of white flour, white sugar, white of egg and cream, put into paper boxes and baked. These biscuits are served with cream over them, except when they are intended to be eaten with wine.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DINNER.

a. Batvinia.

b. Stuffed carrots with sauce.

c. Roast mutton with mushrooms.

d. Compôte or jelly of almonds.

We will here only speak of the *batvinia* (*a*) and the stuffed carrots (*b*). The former, which it may be remembered, corresponds, according to Guthrie, to the black broth of the Spartans, is made of roast or boiled beef, cut up into small pieces, boiled beetroot, spring onions, and carraway seeds, *purée* of sorrel or spinach with eggs chopped up in it, and finally kvass. Another kind of *batvinia* which is eaten only in the summer, consists of fish, spring vegetables, beetroot, kvass, and ice. Kvass is the chief drink, as black bread is the most important article of food in Russia, and both serve a variety of purposes in the national cookery. Kvass is made from the flour of black bread and malt. It has a slight acid taste, is effervescent, and is found very refreshing by those whom it does not disgust. Few foreigners like it at the first trial, but Russians of all classes take it, and the peasants prefer it to everything else as a general drink. Though a fermented liquor, it contains scarcely any alcohol. It is weaker than weak table-beer, and will only keep for a few days unless placed in an ice-cellar, of which there is one in every Russian house. Stuffed carrots (*b*) are carrots scooped out like popguns, loaded with mince meat, and stewed or fried.

The last *menu* we shall print is that of a fast-dinner. Here it is :—

THIRTY-THIRD DINNER.

a. Oukha of sterlet.

b. Fish cutlets with sauce (the water the fish has been boiled in, flour, salad oil* and vinegar).

* On fast-days (that is to say, *jours maigres*) neither butter nor cream can be used, and oil is substituted for them in cookery ; yet, notwithstanding a very general opinion in Europe to the contrary, the Russians on the whole eat less oil than the French.

c. Fried perch.

d. Kissel (a sort of blanc-manger made from fine oat-flour) with almond-milk.

Oukha (*a*) is the most celebrated of the Russian fish-soups. The best kind is made from sterlet, a rich oily, yellow-fleshed, but at the same time exceedingly delicate fish; in form something between an eel and a whiting. The sterlet is caught in the Volga, and will not live in the water of any other river. In winter it is sent frozen to all parts of the empire; but it is always expensive, and in summer, owing to the cost and trouble of transporting it in cans of Volga water, a very small sterlet will cost at Petersburgh as much as ten or twelve roubles. M. Alexandre Dumas, in his highly interesting, and for the most part truthful work, entitled *Memoirs of a Maître d'Armes, or Eighteen Months in St. Petersburgh*, gives to the sterlet a very much higher value than is usually assigned to it; but he at the same time makes the distance from St. Petersburgh to the nearest point of the Volga a thousand miles, instead of about four hundred. One error explains the other. The directions for making the *oukha* in the *Forty-two Dinners* are as follows: "Cut the sterlet into pieces, pour boiling water over it; add salt, spice, and some slices of lemon, and boil." The Russians make other soups out of little cray-fish (*écrevisses*), which may be classed with the French *potage à la bisque.*

The most ancient and popular drinks in Russia are hydromel or mead (called by the same name in Russian), beer, and the aforesaid kvass. Mead, the fine old Scandinavian drink, is mentioned as far back as the tenth century; and in a chronicle of Novgorod of the year 989 it is stated that "a great festival took place, at which a hundred and twenty thousand pounds of honey were consumed." Hydromel is flavoured with various kind of spices and fermented with hops. Gerebtzoff states that beer is mentioned (under the name of *oloul*—the present word being *pivo*) in the *Book of Ranks*, written in the

eleventh and twelfth centuries. But no drink is so ancient as kvass, which, according to the chronicle of Nestor, was in use among the Slavonians in the first century of our era. Among the laws of Yaroslaff there is an old edict determining the quantity of malt to be furnished for making kvass to workmen engaged in building a town.

The Russians learnt to drink wine from the Greeks, during their frequent intercourse with the Eastern empire, long before the Mongol invasion. During the Tartar domination there was less communication with Constantinople and the consumption of wine decreased, but it became greater again during the period of the Czars. In the beginning of the seventeenth century wine was supplied to ambassadors, but the Russians for the most part still preferred their native drinks. The cultivation of the vine was introduced at Astrakhan in 1613, and a German traveller named Strauss, who visited that city in 1675, found that it had been attended with great success; so much so, that without counting what was sold in the way of general trade, the province supplied to the Tsar alone every year two hundred tuns of wine, and fifty tuns of grape brandy. The wines of Greece were at the same time replaced by those of Hungary, which were in great demand when Peter came and introduced the vintage of France. This by many persons will be considered not the least of his reforms.

The Russians acquired the art of distilling from grain in the fourteenth century from the Genoese established in the Crimea, and seem to have lost no time in profiting by their knowledge. They soon began to invent infusions of fruit and berries, which under the name of "nalivka" have long been known to travellers, and which I for my part found excellent. "Raki," about the consumption of which by the Russian soldiers so much was written during the war, is a Turkish spirit, and is unknown in Russia. The Russian grain-spirit is called "votka." The best qualities are more like the best Irish whisky

than anything else, only weaker; but it is of various degrees of excellence as of price. The new common votka, like other new spirits, is fiery, but when purified, and kept for some time, it is excellent and particularly mild. Travellers to Moscow who are curious on the subject of votka may visit a gigantic distillery in the neighbourhood, to which it is easy to gain admission, and where they can obtain information and samples in abundance. Votka is sometimes made in imitation of brandy, and there are also sweet and bitter votkas; and, indeed, votka of all flavours. But the British spirit which the ordinary votka chiefly resembles is whisky. There is one curious custom connected with drinking in Russia which, as far as I am aware, has never been noticed. The Russians drink first and eat afterwards, and never drink without eating. If wine and biscuits are placed on the table, every one takes a glass of wine first, and then a biscuit; and at the zakouska before dinner, those who take the customary glass of votka take an atom of caviare or cheese after it, but not before. It may also be remarked that, as a general rule, the Russians, like the Orientals, drink only at the beginning of a repast.

A hospitable Englishman entertaining a Russian, on seeing him eat after drinking, would press him to drink again, and having drunk a second time, the Russian would eat once more on his own account, which would involve another invitation to drink on the part of the Englishman. As a hospitable Russian, on the other hand, entertaining an Englishman, would endeavour to prevail upon him to eat after drinking, and as it is the Englishman's habit to drink after eating, it is easy to see that too much attention on either side might lead to very unfortunate results.

A great deal is said about the enormous quantity of champagne consumed in Russia. Champagne, however costs five roubles (from sixteen to seventeen shillings) a bottle—the duty alone amounting to one rouble a bottle—and is only drunk habitually by persons of considerable

means. Nevertheless, the champagne bottle goes round more frequently at Russian than at English dinners. It is usually given, as in France, with the pastry and dessert, and no other wine is taken after it. The rich merchants are said to drink champagne very freely at their evening entertainments, but the only merchant at whose house I dined had, unfortunately, adopted Western manners, and gave nothing during the evening but tea. However, at festivals and celebrations of all kinds—whether of congratulation, of welcome, or of farewell—champagne is indispensable. What Alphonse Karr says of women and their toilette—that they regard every event in life as an occasion for a new dress—may certainly be paraphrased and applied to the Russians in connection with champagne. Besides the champagne which is given as a matter of course at dinner-parties and balls, there must be champagne at birthdays, champagne at christenings, champagne at, or in honour of, betrothals, champagne in abundance at weddings, champagne at the arrival of a friend, and champagne at his departure. For those who cannot afford veritable champagne Russian viniculture supplies an excellent imitation in the shape of "Donskoi" and "Crimskoi,"—the wines of the Don and of the Crimea. As "Donskoi" costs only a fifth of the price of real champagne, it will be understood that it is not seldom substituted for the genuine article, both by fraudulent wine-merchants and economic hosts. However, it is a true wine, and far superior to the fabrications of Hamburgh, which, under the name of champagne, find their way all over the north of Europe. It has often been said that the Russians drink champagne merely because it is dear. But the fact is, they have a liking for all effervescing drinks, and naturally, therefore, for champagne, the best of all. Among the effervescing drinks peculiar to Russia we may mention apple *kvass*, *kislya shchee*, and *vaditsa*. *Kislya shchee* is made out of two sorts of malt, three sorts of flour, and dried apples; in apple kvass there are more apples and less malt and flour. *Vaditsa* (a diminutive

of *vada*, water) is made of syrup, water, and a little spirit. All these summer-drinks are bottled and kept in the ice-house. My information about Russian beverages is derived from personal experience and observation, and also from a little Russian work published in Moscow in the year 1828, under the title of *The Ancient Russian Mistress, Housewife, and Cook; or, detailed Instructions as to the Preparation of genuine Ancient Russian Dishes and Drinks, together with Directions on Points connected with Housekeeping, and on Pickling and Preserving in the most ancient Russian Mode and Taste; arranged in convenient order.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

TEA-HOUSES (TRAKTIRS) AND TEA.

A TRUE Russian *restaurant*, or *traktir* (probably from the French *traiteur*) is not to be found in St. Petersburgh, whose *cafés* and *restaurants* are either German or French, or imitated from German or French models. One of the large Moscow traktirs is not only very much larger, but at least twelve times larger than an ordinary French *café*. The best of them is the Troitzkoi traktir, where the merchants meet to complete the bargains they have commenced on the Exchange—that is to say, in the street beneath, where all business is carried on, summer and winter, in the open air. St. Petersburgh is more fortunate, and has a regular bourse, with a chapel attached to it. The merchants always enter this chapel before commencing their regular afternoon's work (change is held at four o'clock in St. Petersburgh), and remain for several minutes

at their devotions, occasionally offering a candle to the Virgin or some saint. Now and then it must happen that a speculator for the rise and a speculator for the fall enter the chapel and commence their orisons at the same time. Probably they pray that they may not be tempted to cheat one another.

There is no special chapel for the Moscow merchants, nor is there one attached to the Troitzkoi traktir, which I am inclined to look upon after all as the real Moscow Exchange. But in each of the rooms of which the entrances as usual are arched, and which together form an apparently interminable suite, the indispensable holy picture is to be seen, and no Russian goes in or out without making the sign of the cross. No Russian, to whatever class he may belong, remains for a moment with his hat on in any inhabited place; whether out of compliment to those who inhabit it, or from respect to the holy pictures, or from mixed reasons. The waiters, of whom there are said to be a hundred and fifty at the Troitzkoi traktir, are all dressed in white, and it is facetiously asserted that they are forbidden to sit down during the day for fear of disturbing the harmony and destroying the purity of their spotless linen. The service is excellent. The waiters watch and divine the wishes of the guests, instead of the guests having to watch, seek, and sometimes scream for the waiters, as is too often the case in England. Here the attendants do everything for the visitor; cut up his *piroy* (meat or fish patty), so that he may eat it with his fork; pour out his tea, fill his chibook, and even bring it to him ready lighted. The reader perceives that there is a certain Oriental style about the Russian traktirs. The great article of consumption in them is tea. Every one orders tea, either by itself or to follow the dinner, and the majority of those who come into the place take nothing else. You can have a tumbler of tea or a pot of tea, but in ordering it you do not ask for tea at all but for so many portions of sugar. The origin of this curious custom it

is scarcely worth while to consider, but it very probably dates from the last European war, when, during the general blockade, the price of sugar in Russia rose to about four shillings a pound.

All sorts of stories have been told about the quantity of tea consumed by Russian merchants, nor do I look upon any of them as exaggerated. From twelve to twenty cups are thought nothing of. I have seen two merchants enter a traktir, order so many portions of sugar, and drink cup after cup of tea, until the tea-urn before them was empty; yet the ordinary tea-urn of the traktir holds at least a gallon, or a gallon and a half.

One of the most curious traktirs in Moscow is that of the "Old Religionists," a Russian sect of whom we need only say here that they derive their name from their preference of the ancient version of the Scriptures used in Russia up to the time of Nicon, to the more correct translation introduced by that prelate in the sixteenth century. They also attach peculiar sanctity to the old ecclesiastical pictures, which they say, were painted by devout artists, instead of being manufactured, like the modern ones, by profane artisans in the midst of smoking and drinking. They are intense patriots, the most Slavonian of all Slavonians, and haters of Western manners, which they regard as synonymous with luxury and vice. They are also great quoters and perverters of scriptural texts. Thus, it is said that their abstinence from tobacco-smoking is founded upon the well-known passage, which teaches that "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which *cometh out* of the mouth, this defileth a man;" and that they refuse to shave their beards, because "man is made in the image of God." Probably, however, they retain the beard simply as they retain the caftan, as a sign of nationality. The Old Religionists associate as much as possible among themselves, and, as I have said, have a traktir of their own; to which however any one is admitted. The waiters in this establishment, contrary to the usual

custom in traktirs, are attired in dark caftans, and smoking is not, under any circumstances, allowed. As none but "Old Religionists" would care about visiting a traktir where it is impossible to smoke, the place is left entirely to that eccentric body, and caftans and beards are to be seen at every table. The rooms are entered through curtained arches, as at other traktirs. There is, of course, an abundance of holy pictures, most of which are of greater antiquity, though differing outwardly in no respect but that of age, from the "images" of the present day. It may be mentioned too, that on the wall opposite the principal entrance are two pictures of the same size, and hung on the same line. One of these represents the "Virgin Mary," the other the "Emperor Nicholas." The traktir of the Old Religionists is further remarkable for the excellence of its tea and of its cooking generally. Its most celebrated product is *blinni*, a species of pancake eaten during Lent with caviare.

A notorious traktir of another kind is "the little Poushkin traktir" in the Clothes' Market, or "Elbow Market," as it is also called, from the elbowing of the crowd, not to repeat another of its appellations derived from entomology which is equally significant. The little Poushkin traktir is not named after Poushkin the great poet, but after Poushkin the proprietor of the Moskovsky traktir, whose establishment it resembles about as much as the Clothes' Market resembles the Palace in the Kremlin. It is as if some vendor of trotters and sheep's heads in St. Giles's were to call his shop "Mivart's" or the "Clarendon." The prices of the *soi-disant* Poushkin are, we believe, the lowest in the whole world. He reckons in copper money,* and to

* Formerly there were two kinds of money current in Russia—silver roubles and copeiks, and assignation roubles and copeiks; but the latter were always spoken of by the people as copper money. The peasants still reckon in copper money, though for the last quarter of a century silver money and notes changeable at sight for the exact amount they represent have alone been in circulation. The silver

an enterprising customer who is ready to take a complete dinner, will supply two copeiks' worth of soup, one of bread, four of meat, two of kasha, and one of kvass, constituting altogether a very remarkable meal for ten copeiks copper, or about five farthings of our own currency.

At a few of the traktirs there are billiard-tables (for the Russian game). At others there are enormous self-playing organs, some of which have cost the proprietor as much as 25,000 roubles. There are traktirs, too, in "Skin-them-alive Street" (Jivodyorskaia Oulitza), frequented by the gipsies, of which I shall have occasion to speak in a chapter devoted specially to the "Tsigani" of Moscow.

The Tartars (or, more correctly, Tatars) also have a traktir of their own; at least there is a traktir in the "Tatarskaia Oulitza," or "Tartar Street," which is always full of them, though the place is kept by a Russian, and every one is admitted. I took some refreshment there once, and as far as I could judge, horse-flesh formed no part of the repast; nor could I ascertain that any specially Tartar dishes were ever prepared there. Seen from the outside, the "Tartars' traktir," as it is called, is a low, dirty-looking building; but the interior is remarkably clean, in spite of the dingy, faded appearance of the tawdry scarlet curtains with which the windows and arches are hung, and the bareness of the walls, which are so far guiltless of paint or plaster, that in many places the very bricks are visible. From twelve to twenty Tartars were sitting about the room in groups, attired in gaudy dressing-gowns, and brilliantly ribbed skull-caps, and smoking long chibouks. All were drinking tea, and the proprietor said they rarely if ever ordered anything else. Whether in towns or in villages they live quite by themselves, but always on good terms with the Russians, who address them familiarly as "Prince." Whether this title is given ironically or not I cannot tell, but the Tartars accept it very gravely, and it

rouble when the assignation money was called in was worth three assignation roubles and a half.

is said that every one of them claims to be of the best possible descent. These Tartars belong to the same race as the Turks, and have nothing of the Mongol type of countenance. How far the Mongol invaders mixed with the Tartar and Turkish tribes whom they encountered and subjected in their impetuous course, it is impossible to say; but none of the Russian Tartars that I ever saw had the high cheek-bones, flat nose, and slanting eyes, by which the Mongol face is characterized. A few of the Little Russians (in the south) appear to have Mongol blood in their veins, but the Russian Tartars have as little of it as the great bulk of the Russian population.

The Moscow Tartars trade in the merchandise sent by their compatriots from Kazan and Astrakhan, Bucharia, and Khiva, and have no dealings with the Persians who import shawls, nor with the Armenians who engage in commerce of every kind. "They eat horse-flesh," says a native writer, "perform their ablutions, go to the mosque, and shut up their wives. They wear dressing-gowns, and go about in *telegas*, or on foot, with parcels of goods, which they endeavour to sell to the proprietor or lodgers of any house they may think fit to enter, and which they will penetrate at any risk. . . They must live very soberly, for none are ever seen drunk; and if by chance they give themselves up to the use of strong liquors, it is necessary for them to obtain an authorization, and to have each bottle labelled 'Balsam.' They live very retired, and apart from the rest of the population; at all events I have lived thirty years in Moscow, without either myself or any of my friends having formed a regular acquaintance with any of them.* They do business in a sufficiently honest manner; endeavouring, in the first instance, to impose upon

* Nevertheless, I have known persons who, travelling in the country, have stopped at Tartar huts. They found the inmates very hospitable, and exceedingly clean. In the country the Tartars have generally their own villages, in each of which there is a mosque. There, as in the towns, they live quite apart from the Russians.—H. S. E.

the purchaser, but finally selling their goods at moderate prices: for the rest, profiting like all other tradespeople, by every advantage which presents itself. They are of gentle disposition, at least they are never seen fighting or quarrelling. Their cemetery is at the back of that of the Monastery of the Don. Every summer the Tartars may be seen on the shores of the Ostankina lake (at about four versts from Moscow), where they perform regularly their ablutions."

I may add, that the Moscow Tartars seem to assume that every man they meet, especially if he be a foreigner, is in urgent want of a dressing-gown; and on the occasion of my visiting the traktir in the "Street of the Tartars," I had scarcely finished eating when I received a very pressing offer to supply me with some great bargains in the *robe-de-chambre* line. The dressing-gowns were at the Tartar's house opposite the traktir, and I accepted his invitation to accompany him there, "if only to look at them and admire their beauty." The houses are completely shut in by a high wall, which runs all down the street; and there is again a division in each house, one part being occupied by the women of the family, the other by the men. The little girls are allowed to run about the house as they please, but from the age of twelve or thirteen they are kept in the women's apartments. The Tartar women never go into the street without veiling their faces, and, as a rule, never attend any places of entertainment. My Tartar of the dressing-gowns, however, told me that he had occasionally taken his wife to public assemblies where no one knew her; but that he never took her to the houses of his friends, nor allowed them to see her when they visited him. He coolly maintained that men could talk very well without women, and get on without them generally. Occasionally, however, the wives of Tartars of humble means do appear in public, and they may be sometimes seen returning from the bath, walking slowly along wrapped up in their

dressing-gowns, with which they cover the whole of their face except the eyes.

At the end of Tatarskaia Oulitza is a mosque, to which, in acknowledgment of an absurd purchase I had made, my friend the Tartar consented to guide me, though he declared himself averse to entering the building in my company. It was Friday afternoon, and in half an hour the principal service of the weekly Mahometan Festival was to begin. Accordingly I returned to the traktir, gave the Tartar some tea, and then went into the mosque by the entrance pointed out to me. It is built of a clear white stone, like marble. Like other mosques, it is entirely without ornament or furniture of any kind, except one magnificent lamp dependent from the ceiling, and a strip of rich carpet, on which five dressing-gown sellers—their heads enveloped in turbans—were performing their devotions. Some of the Russian churches (especially those of the convents) have interiors almost as simple and impressive as that of this mosque. There are neither chairs nor benches nor pulpits to disturb the harmony of the architectural lines, but the glittering iconostasis and the pictures, with their tinsel and jewellery, spoil everything. I need scarcely remind the reader that it is Religion, not Art, which places these paintings in the Russian churches.

The Persians have also the free exercise of their religion; and the Armenians, as members of a Christian church, have the same privileges as the Roman Catholics; and, in fact, are quite on an equality with the Greeks. The Jews, however, until lately, were not tolerated in Moscow, unless, being of German, French, or English origin, they wore the ordinary European costume. Jews from Judea, bearded and gaberdined, were allowed to enter the city if their business required it, but they were obliged to inhabit a house set apart for them in the Kitai gorod (Chinese town), and even then could only remain a certain number of

days. Accordingly, Jews rarely appear in Moscow in their native Oriental dress, which consists of a black caftan with a girdle of the same colour, breeches, and long boots. Circassians, Tchechnians, and other natives of the Caucasus, are also to be seen in Moscow, especially on what is called the Exchange, which is, in fact, the pavement in front of that building, or rather the traktir opposite to it. I have said, that in this traktir the most important bargains are made over tea, which is really the great beverage of the country. "Tea," says M. Gerebtzoff, "has become, for every one, an habitual article of consumption, and replaces, advantageously for morality, brandy and beer; for on all occasions when a bargain has to be concluded, or when a companion has to be entertained, or on receiving or taking leave of a friend, tea is given instead of wine or brandy." Indeed, I not only observed that in the Moscow traktirs nearly every one drank tea, but that it was a favourite beverage with all classes on all occasions. The middle and upper classes take tea twice or three times a day,—always in the morning, and often twice in the evening. The isvostchik, who formerly had a reputation for drunkenness, which travellers of the present day continue to ascribe to him, appears to prefer tea to every other drink. Such, at least, was my experience; and his mode of asking for a *pour boire* seems to confirm it. Some years since travellers used to tell us of the isvostchik asking at the end of his drive for *votka* money ("*na votkou*"); at present the invariable request is for tea-money ("*na tchai*"). Even in road-side inns, where I have seen from twelve to twenty coachmen and postilions sitting down together, nothing but tea was being drunk. A well-known tourist has told us that every Russian peasant possesses a tea-urn or *samovar*, but this is not the case. The majority of the peasants are too poor to afford such a luxury as tea, except on rare occasions, but a tea-urn is one of the first objects that a peasant who has saved a little money buys; and it is true, that in some prosperous villages

there is a samovar in every hut; and in all the post-houses and inns each visitor is supplied with a separate one.

The samovar, which, literally, means "self-boiler," is made of brass lined with tin, with a tube in the centre. In fact it resembles the English urn, except that in the centre-tube red-hot cinders are placed instead of the iron heater. Of course, the charcoal, or *braise*, has to be ignited in a back-kitchen or courtyard, for in a room the carbonic acid proceeding from it would prove injurious. It has no advantage then, whatever, over the English urn, except that it can be heated with facility in the open air, with nothing but some charcoal, a few sticks of thin dry wood, and a lucifer; hence its value at picnics, where it is considered indispensable. In the woods of Sakolniky, in the gardens of Marina Roschia, and in the grounds adjoining the Petrovsky Palace, all close to Moscow, large supplies of samovars are kept at the tea-houses, and each visitor or party of visitors is supplied with one. Indeed, the quantity of tea consumed at these suburban retreats in the spring and summer is prodigious. In Russia there is no interval between winter and spring; as soon as the frost breaks up the grass sprouts, the trees blossom, and all nature is alive. In that country of extremes there is sometimes as much difference between April and May as there is in England between January and June. The summer is celebrated by various promenades to the country, which take place at Easter, on the first of May, Ascension Day, Trinity Sunday, and other occasions. The great majority of these promenades are of a festive nature, but some, like that which is made on the 19th of May to the monastery and cemetery of the Don, have a penitential, or at least a mournful character. The samovar, however, is present even in the churchyard. It is true, I never joined in one of the pilgrimages to the Donskoi convent, but in other cemeteries outside Moscow and St. Petersburgh (intermural burial not being tolerated) I noticed that

the custodians kept a supply of samovars in their lodges for the benefit of visitors. And, after all, what can be more appropriate than an urn in a cemetery?

Between St. Petersburgh and Kovno or Tauroggen, there are upwards of fifty "stations," at each of which tea can be procured. Travellers whose route does not lie along the government post-roads take samovars with them in their carriages; and small samovars that can be packed into the narrowest compass are made for the use of officers starting on a campaign, and other persons likely to find themselves in places where it may be difficult to procure hot water. Small tea-caddies are also manufactured with a similar object. Each caddy contains one or more glasses —for men among themselves usually drink their tea, not out of tea-cups, but out of tumblers. Not many years since it was the fashion to give cups to women and tumblers to men in the evening; but the tumbler is gradually being banished.

The Russians never take milk in their tea; they take either cream, or a slice of lemon or preserved fruit, or simply sugar without the addition of anything else. They hold that milk spoils tea, and they are right. Tea with lemon or preserves (forming a kind of tea-punch, well worthy the attention of tea-totallers) is only taken in the evening. Sometimes the men add rum. The superiority of the Russian overland tea to that which is received in the West of Europe from Canton has been often asserted, and sometimes denied. Oddly enough, M. Tegoborsky, the late Russian senator, denies persistently that the tea from Kiakhta is at all better than the Canton tea. He declares in his work on the productive forces of Russia that he has tasted floury pekoe in London quite equal to the same description of tea (*tsvetochny*) sold in Moscow. Perhaps M. Tegoborsky's taste was inferior to his literary talent; or rather—as in his chapter on tea he endeavours to prove that Russia would be benefited immensely by having her ports thrown open to vessels from Canton—his taste may

have been influenced by his wishes. For our own part we have no hesitation in saying that no such tea can be found in London as that sold in Moscow, and throughout Russia, except in some parts near the Baltic shore, or the Prussian frontier, where smuggled Canton tea is sold. Sir John Davis, who has paid more attention to the tea question than M. Tegoborsky, says "it would be absurd to pretend that the long sea voyage in which the equator is twice crossed (and the water in which the ship crossed is often heated between eighty and ninety degrees) has no ill effect on tea cargoes. With an absolute and complete absence of all humidity, we know that heat has little or no decomposing effect; but such a state cannot be the ordinary characteristic of a ship's hold, as must be clear to all who have found the difficulty of preserving some articles from damage between this and India. Some of the Company's finest hyson teas were packed in double cases of wood, besides the canisters. Black tea is better able to contend with the chances of injury to which a cargo may be disposed than green. It has generally been subjected in a much greater degree to the action of fire in drying, and has besides less delicacy of flavour than the other."

Sir John Davis goes on to observe, that there is no difficulty in accounting for the superior condition in which "green tea especially" is found in Russia, the region it traverses being generally dry as well as cold; thanks to which, none of the original qualities of the tea are lost by evaporation or otherwise. The most delicate kind, however, that comes to Russia is the tsvetochny, or flowery tea, to which the nearest equivalent to be obtained in the West of Europe is flowery pekoe; the best specimens of the latter, either from the reasons mentioned by Sir John Davis, or from natural inferiority, are not to be compared to the finer specimens of the former. Probably, too, the enormous prices paid by the Russians for their tea have something to do with the question. There is but little sale in England for the very best qualities of tea that are

imported now: and it is doubtful whether China ever sent us her choicest produce at all. It is known that the blossoms are plucked from the trees several times in the course of the season. The first gathering gives the rarest quality of tsvetochny; the second gives the ordinary tsvetochny; at last, instead of tsvetochny, common tea is obtained. The earliest gatherings of tea-blossoms or flowers are sent to Russia, and it is by no means certain that any are exported to England. Several of the St. Petersburgh journals suggested, before the publication of the recent tariff, that the monopoly of tea so long enjoyed by the caravan trade should be at length abolished, and that Canton or other tea should be admitted by sea. These suggestions have not been adopted, and the Russians will still have to pay about two roubles (six and sixpence) a pound for ordinary congou, when, if the ports were open to tea cargoes, it might be sold, after payment of a moderate duty, at a little more than half that price; and the annual consumption will continue to be limited to something more than nine millions of pounds, whereas, with the known predilection of the Russians for the beverage, a great diminution in price would have given it an almost indefinite increase.

The advocates for admitting tea through the ports maintain that the superiority of some of the caravan tea over any that could be introduced by sea is so marked, that it would always command a sale at high prices from those rich amateurs who, in certain cases, will pay as much as thirty-five shillings a pound for particular growths. At present an excellent mixture of black tea and flowery pekoe is sold at ten shillings; and it is quite true that no such tea can be procured in any other country, except China itself. It is nevertheless highly probable that ninety-nine families out of a hundred would prefer a somewhat inferior mixture, at half the price; and in this case the Siberian trade, to protect which the Government is so careful, would indeed be injured. The maintenance of

the caravan trade through Siberia, to the injury of all the tea-drinking inhabitants of Russia, to be rightly judged, must be viewed in connection with the projected railway from Nijni-Novgorod to Irkutsk; and as long as any intention of forming so important a line is seriously entertained; it must be politic to encourage as much as possible the overland traffic between Russia and China.

By way of completing my information on the subject of tea in Russia, I have endeavoured to ascertain the date of its introduction, but without any positive result. It is certain, however, that the Russians had a considerable trade with the East before the Mongol invasion; and probably the Mongols who came from the plains bordering on China were themselves acquainted with the use of tea. It is known that Russia, after her subjugation, used to carry on a regular trade between Novogorod and the North of Europe on one side, and Persia, India, and China on the other. The Russians, after the expulsion of the Tartars and the conquest of Siberia, endeavoured to establish a commercial intercourse with China, and sent their first ambassador to Pekin in 1606, though he never arrived there, owing to some revolution in Mongolia. Several other embassies made fruitless attempts to enter the Chinese empire, and it was not until 1654 that Baikoff, with a suite of attachées, succeeded, after a journey of two years, in reaching Pekin. Baikoff, annoyed at the emperor declining to receive him personally, returned to Russia in 1657. No treaty of commerce had been concluded, but the ambassador had discovered several practicable roads between Siberia and Pekin, and since that time caravans of merchants have journeyed constantly between Russia and China. The English about this period did a considerable trade with Archangel, and it appears probable that the first Russian caravan from China brought tea, and that a certain amount was soon afterwards exported to England; for we read in Pepy's *Diary*, "Sent for a cup of tea, a Chinese drink, of which I had never drunk before," under the date of 1661.

CHAPTER XIX.

CLUBS, ASSEMBLIES, AND BALLS.

THE best club in Moscow in some respects is the English Club, originally founded by Englishmen, but composed at present almost exclusively of Russians.

It is strange that in England, where the virtues of domestic life are held in so much esteem, clubs should have been invented, but such is the case. In the English Club at Moscow the separatist principle is carried out to its fullest extent. And as women are never admitted, neither balls, nor masquerades, nor concerts, nor fêtes of any kind take place there as at the other clubs. The English Club is kept open until midnight, after which all who remain are liable to a fine. There is a supper every evening, and house dinners twice a-week, but there is no dining *à la carte*. The house, situated in the Tverskoy, the principal street in Moscow, is large and commodious. It contains an excellent reading-room, in which all the native and a large number of foreign journals are received (among others, the *Times*, the *Illustrated London News*, *Illustrated Times*, and two or three English reviews). There are several billiard-rooms and card-rooms, but hazard and roulette are not permitted. The number of members is limited to six hundred, and candidates for admission have often to wait several years for their chance of the ballot. The affairs of the club are managed by six directors elected annually, to whom is entrusted the purchase of wine and the regulation of prices generally.

The Merchants' Club, according to the terms of its constitution, is composed of merchants, professors, doctors, and artists possessing diplomas from the Academy of Arts. The club is open every day, and in winter balls and mas-

querades are given. On ordinary occasions the doors are closed at two in the morning, after which time the members who still remain are, as at the English Club, subjected to a fine, which is doubled from half-hour to half-hour. It has been calculated that a member staying all night in either of these clubs would, at seven in the morning, owe the committee the sum of 16,384 roubles. The society at the Merchants' Club is very superior to what is generally understood by merchants' society in Russia. Its ball-room is one of the best in Moscow, and will hold as many as fifteen hundred persons.

The only other club of importance in Moscow (for there is also a German club) is the club of the Nobility. Here, as at the other establishments of the same kind, the members dine together once or twice a-week. The dinner, which is partly Russian, partly French in style, is admirably cooked and served, and costs only a rouble, or a rouble and a half—exclusive, of course, of wine. Several English journals are also received at this club; indeed, the *Times* and the illustrated journals are taken in at all of them.

But the most remarkable place of réunion is the Assembly of the Nobility, where the nobles of the Moscow government—that is to say, the hereditary ones, in the possession of land—meet for the discussion of their affairs, but which owes its chief celebrity to its balls. This assembly-room is the largest and probably the handsomest in the world.

Like the Hall of St. George in the palace of the Kremlin, its walls and the pillars which support the roof are entirely of alabaster, relieved only by delicate gilt mouldings. It is entirely without drapery, and the same effect which we noticed in the Hall of St. George is produced by the reflection of the light from the large masses of white. The Assembly of the Nobility will contain four or five thousand persons, and its capabilities were sufficiently tested on the occasion of the ball given to the Emperor after his coronation. Round the ball-room, and raised a

few steps above it, is a spacious gallery for the accommodation of all who are not actually engaged in dancing. There is also an upper gallery for spectators, but this is chiefly used on the nights devoted to concerts. In the rooms at the side card-tables are arranged, and in the largest of these dancing sometimes take place, when there is not a sufficient number of persons to fill the large hall. All the corridors, ante-chambers, and refreshment-rooms are magnificently furnished, and there is a special suite of apartments for the use of the Emperor, whom the Assembly has the honour to reckon among its members. Here it was that Alexander II., in his interview with the nobles of Moscow, rebuked them for their tardiness in carrying out the measures of reform projected by him, and refused to be present at the entertainment offered to him. Two years before I had seen his Majesty at the coronation-ball given to him in this hall, on which occasion the nobles, who perhaps did not believe in the Emperor's reported intention to emancipate the peasants, were profuse in their manifestations of loyalty.

The assemblies of nobles which are held in every province have not much political importance. They elect a "marshal" or president, who *ought* to possess a certain political power, though practically (as an ex-marshal assured me) he has none. The nobles choose their own representative, but their choice has to be confirmed by the Emperor.

Although only the hereditary or territorial nobles take part in the deliberations of the Assembly, all the personal nobles—that is to say, regimental officers not of noble descent, and civil functionaries of a certain grade—enjoy the valuable right of subscribing to the balls which during the winter take place once a week.

Dancing in Russia is very much like dancing in any other European country, except that in Russia the ball always ends with a mazurka, of which the rhythm and the step are known everywhere, but not the figures and general character. A kind of follow-my-leader aspect is given to

the mazurka, by all the succeeding couples imitating the evolutions of the first. Another peculiarity of the dance consists in the ladies choosing their own partners, a process which is effected in a variety of ingenious ways more or less complimentary to the gentlemen selected. Sometimes as the men pass by in ignominious procession, the lady who wishes to make one of them her cavalier claps her hands as the fortunate individual passes. Or a lady holds a small looking-glass; the aspiring partners pass behind and look into the mirror, when the lady wipes off with her hand the image of him that pleaseth her not, and accepts the services of the agreeable one with a bow. The mazurka is a graceful dance, but it also demands energy and requires the time to be marked by vigorous applications of the boot-heel to the polished floor. It is either of Cossack, Polish, or perhaps generally of Slavonian origin, and it has a rhythmical character, which distinguishes it agreeably from the sliding monotony of the quadrille. I may mention one other peculiarity of Russian balls: in the waltz or polka, a lady is never engaged for the entire dance, but only for one or two turns.

In Russia, as in England, a ball without a supper would be regarded as an incomplete and absurd entertainment. Perhaps, as the Russian mode of dining has been adopted by a large class in England, Russian suppers will one day be introduced. I can best describe a Russian supper by saying that it is a dinner without ceremony or soup. At the suppers of the Assembly, meat, fish, poultry, and game are served hot, and are accompanied or followed by salads, pastry, fruit, and preserves, the wine suitable to each course being brought round exactly as at a dinner. If there are too many persons at the ball to sit down all at once, the service is repeated from beginning to end whenever a fresh batch of dancers arrive in the supper-room. I must not take leave of the Assembly-room without mentioning the mode by which it is lighted up; that is to say, the manner in which the wax-candles are set light to. Those who visit the Assembly in the day-time, and are

attracted by the beauty of the chandeliers, may observe that a thin thread connects the wicks of all the tapers in each, and that all these clusters of wax-lights are again connected by means of the same almost imperceptible thread, which, like a telegraphic wire, runs from one to the other all round the room. All the thread or string has been steeped in naphtha or some other highly inflammable spirit. At the hour fixed for the commencement of the ball there is only a faint half-light in the place, but at a given signal one end of the prepared string is ignited, and instantly a line of fire is seen to dart round the room, encircling each of the chandeliers, and in a few seconds changing comparative darkness into the most brilliant light. This system of lighting has also been adopted in the Imperial palaces. Independently of the surprising and almost magical effect which it produces in an immense ball-room, it has its advantages in any apartment where a large number of candles are used, for it enables a single servant, with nothing but a lucifer, to light the whole of them at one lighting.

I may here mention two remarkable customs in connection with visiting in Russia. In making a morning's call, it is considered utterly disrespectful to appear in what Englishmen and Frenchmen consider morning-dress; and only a foreigner newly arrived in the country would be excused for committing such a gross breach of good manners. The dress-coat is held in such estimation that not alone is it "the only wear" in which to present yourself to a lady, or even to a gentleman with whom you happen to be on terms of great ceremony, but it is indispensable for entering the Gallery of the Hermitage at St. Petersburgh, simply because the Hermitage is one of the Imperial palaces. For visiting purposes evening costume is obligatory, from the first thing in the morning. It would be a very great mistake to infer from this that social intercourse in Russia is rendered stiff and tiresome by a number of vain formalities, for there are no more

thoroughly sociable people than the Russians. Only it happens to be the fashion with them to put on in the morning the solemn garments which in England are not assumed until the evening. On the other hand, the Russians have invented a very ingenious mode of avoiding mere ceremonial visits altogether. Those who do not wish to call on their friends at the new year send three roubles (ten shillings) to the poor, and on New Year's Day the journals publish a list of persons who have given to charities the money they would otherwise have spent on cards. This is accepted by every one as a polite and satisfactory alternative.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RUSSIAN GIPSIES.

THE gipsies in the centre and south of Russia keep cattle, which find abundant pasture in the large grassy plains of the steppes; or they devote themselves to horse-curing, and now and then to horse-stealing. Indeed, according to general report, they will steal anything; but when they *do* labour for their living, it is as veterinary surgeons that the men occupy themselves—the women telling fortunes, dealing in trinkets, or in some cases singing and dancing in companies. They are not liked by proprietors of estates, whom they are in the habit of robbing; the peasants despise them, and, one way and another, they have been a good deal persecuted. Before venturing to pitch their tents in the field or wood where they wish to pass the night, they are obliged to obtain the consent of the landowner; and I am told that this is usually granted, either from a feeling of humanity, or perhaps because the gipsies are known to abstain from robbing the person who shelters them—slight, indeed, as that shelter is. In the severest weather these hardy wanderers, who, like the "moujiks," wear sheepskins, have still nothing but their thin tents of coarse linen to protect them from the outer cold; the Russians say, that the gipsy children, when infants, are rolled in the snow, and it would be scarcely less wonderful that the little creatures should not die from such treatment, than that they should afterwards be able to support, without apparent inconvenience, a temperature of twenty degrees and upwards of

cold (Reaumur's thermometer). The nomadic gipsies must not be confounded with the singing gipsies of Moscow, who, if (as many people imagine) civilization means luxury, are highly civilized. But if the gipsy vocalists are the delight of Moscow, the wandering gipsies of the plains have had the honour of suggesting to Poushkin his poem of the "Tsigani," which has delighted all Russia :—

"An unruly band of gipsies (commences the poem) wander through Bessarabia.
They pass the night beneath coarse tents, close to the river-side.
Such a night's lodging is as sweet as liberty itself.
The carts and kibitkas have carpet-covered hoods ;
Between the wheels burn fires,
Around which each family prepares its supper.
The horses are grazing in the wide field,
A tame bear lies free behind the carts.
All is life and freedom.
Then the various families quietly prepare for the morrow's journey :
The women are singing, the children screaming, and the sound of the anvil is heard.
Next a dead silence comes over the scene.
All is calm and still.
The barking of the dogs and the neighing of the horses are alone audible ;
The fires are everywhere extinguished, and all the gipsies are at rest.
But the moon shines in the sky, and lights up the peaceful scene,
And there is still one old man sitting awake and alone in his tent.
He warms himself with the last heat of the dying embers,
And gazes into the dark distance of the misty field.
His youthful daughter has gone to walk in the plains;

But she is accustomed to a wild boundless freedom, and will return.
It is night already, and soon the moon will leave her habitation;
And yet Zemphira does not come back, and the old man's frugal supper is getting cold.
She appears at last;
A youth, a stranger, and unknown to the tribe, follows her.
The old man knows not the stranger.
'Father,' says the girl, 'I bring a visitor with me;
I met him in the field behind the hill,
And invited him to pass the night in our encampment.
He wishes to be a wandering gipsy like ourselves;
He is pursued by the law, but I will be his friend and companion.
His name is Aleko, and he is ready to follow me everywhere."

The old man welcomes Aleko, tells him to remain with the gipsies, and recommends him to take to some occupation, "either forge iron, or sing songs, and go round the villages with the bear."

The next morning the gipsies rise with the sun, the tents are struck, the horses harnessed to the carts, and the band is soon scattered over the wide plain.

"The asses bear the playful children in their panniers;
Husbands, brothers, wives, and maidens follow.
What screaming and riot!
The songs of the gipsies, and the roaring of the bear impatiently rattling his chain,
The variety of the coloured rags, the half-nakedness of the children,
The barking and howling of the dogs,
The noise of the bagpipes, and the rattling of the carts—

All is poverty, wildness, and confusion,
But full of movement and life.
What a contrast to our dead effeminacy,
To that frivolous and idle life of ours—
A life monotonous as the songs of slaves!"

Aleko, as he departs, gazes sadly on the vacant plain, unable to explain the cause of his secret grief; for he is with the black-eyed Zemphira, and "is a free dweller on the face of the earth, with the bright sun in his southern glory shining upon him." But, in spite of the careless liberty of the gipsy's life, Aleko is still not his own master. Sometimes "the distant star of glory" beckons him, at others visions of luxury and pleasure come before him. He cannot reconcile himself to his lot.

"Tell me, my friend," says Zemphira, "do you not regret what you have left for ever?"

"What have I left?" asks Aleko.

"Could you but know the slavery of our suffocating towns!
Men cluster together, and never breathe the fresh morning breeze,
Nor know the smell of the sweet spring meadows.
They are ashamed of love;
They traffic in their own liberty;
They chase away their thoughts;
They bow their heads before idols,
And ask for money and chains!
What have I left?
The agitation of treason, the sentence of prejudice,
The crowd's insane persecution, or brilliant dishonour!"

Zemphira reminds him of the luxurious life and the beautiful women he has left. Aleko replies that they are not comparable to Zemphira and freedom, but the old man sagely remarks that "liberty is not always dear to those

accustomed to effeminacy." He relates a tradition of a Russian exiled by the Czar having taken refuge with his tribe; "he possessed the beautiful gift of song, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters." But he pined for the scenes he had left, and though every one loved him, and though, when the rapid Danube was frozen and the winter whirlwind was howling, they covered the old man with a soft downy fur, yet he could never get accustomed to the hardships of their beggarly life. Pale and emaciated he wandered about, saying that God had punished him for his sins, and, walking on the banks of the Danube poured forth bitter tears when he remembered his far-distant birth-place. "And on his death-bed," concludes the old man, "he ordered that his bones—or they would not know peace even in death—should be carried to the south."

At last Aleko has "shaken off the chains of civilization and is free; he has forgotten his former life, and is accustomed to that of the gipsies. He has learnt their poor but sonorous language, and enjoys the intoxication of their eternal idleness."

Two years afterwards the old man is basking in the sun, while the daughter sits before the cradle and sings. Aleko listens and turns pale as he hears the following words:—

"Old husband, cruel husband,
Cut me, burn me;
I fear not you,
Nor knife, nor fire.
I hate you;
I despise you;
I love another,
And loving him will die."

Aleko. "Silence! Your singing annoys me: I am not fond of your wild songs."

Zemphira. "You do not like them! but what is that to me? I sing for myself." And she repeats the song with the addition of these verses:—

"He is fresher than the spring,
Hotter than the summer's sun;
How young and brave he is!
And how much he loves me!
How I caressed him
In the silence of the night!
And how we laughed
At your grey hairs!"

That night, when Aleko is sleeping, he sobs and moans in his heavy slumber. "Do not touch him," says the old man; "there is a tradition among the Russians that at night a household ghost stifles the breath of the sleeper; he disappears with daybreak. Sit with me."

"Father, he whispers 'Zemphira'!" exclaims the girl.

"He seeks you even in his dreams," is the answer; "you are dearer to him than peace."

"His love is hateful to me," she replies.

"Do not believe in evil dreams," she says to Aleko when he awakes, complaining of a terrible vision.

"I believe in nothing," answers Aleko; "I believe neither in dreams, nor in tender promises, nor in your heart."

"Father, she does not love me!" he says to the old man, after Zemphira has gone.

"Be comforted, my friend," responds the latter; "she is only a child: your grief is unreasonable. Your love is sad and heavy: a girl's is a jest, a laugh. Be consoled. Who can say to a maiden's heart: 'Love once, and do not change'?"

But Aleko swears that, if deceived, he will be avenged; and a highly dramatic scene occurs (perhaps the best of all in this half-poem, half-play—for which very reason I omit it, inasmuch as its effect would be spoiled unless I

were to give the work entire), in which he surprises the lovers, and stabs them; the girl repeating the last line of her song, "And loving him I die."

Then the old man approaches Aleko, and says:

"'Leave us, thou bitter man!
We are free and wild; we have no law;
We do not torture or kill;
We want neither blood nor groans;
But we should scorn to live with a murderer.
You are not born for a free life—
You live for yourself alone.
Your voice would now be horrible to us;
We are timid and kind-hearted,
You are bad and bold.
Leave us—farewell; peace be with you!'

"He said; and the whole encampment started off at once,
And departed from the valley of the terrible dead.
Soon all had disappeared;
But in that horrible field remained one solitary kibitka,
Covered with a wretched carpet.
So sometimes, on the approach of winter,
On a foggy morning, when a flock of cranes
Forsake the fields, and fly shrieking towards the south,
One of them, pierced by a fatal shot,
Remains sadly behind,
With wounded, drooping wing.
Night came. Nobody made fire by the side of that dismal kibitka,
And nobody slept beneath its hood."

Probably, from the author's point of view, the poem of the "Gipsies" owes all its importance to the character

of Aleko, who longs for liberty in the midst of a life "monotonous as the songs of slaves," and who is yet unworthy of freedom, and unable to attain it because he "lives for himself alone," and cannot govern his own passions. But the description of the gipsy encampment is full of picturesqueness and truthfulness; and it is for that reason chiefly that I have translated it, as giving the best possible account of a band of Russian gipsies at rest and in movement.

Those who have read Mr. Borrow's admirable work on the "Gipsies of Spain," will remember that it opens with a short account of the Moscow gipsies, and especially of a party of them that Mr. Borrow met at Marina Roshche, who, being addressed by him in the Romany language, welcomed him in Russian with shouts of "*Kak mui vas lioubim!*" (How much we love you!) These were gipsy vocalists, who live not in tents, but in the restaurants or traktirs of Skin-them-alive Street—their favourite locality. I visited one of their habitations, and found, as it appeared to me, that the inmates endeavoured to combine the pleasures of a nomadic life with those of the ordinary *vie de café*. Disdaining benches and chairs, the gipsies had formed a species of encampment on the floor; the old men and women, with the children, sat or lay together in groups, and the young girls wandered about the room seeking what they might smoke or drink. As nearly all these young girls were pretty or graceful, or had beautiful eyes or insidious manners, they smoked and drank whatever they pleased, which happened at the moment to be cigarettes and tea. The venerable parents appeared to be fond of rum, and went through the most animated and expressive pantomime with the view of making known their desire to become intoxicated, shouting at the same time "Rom! rom!" The old men, with their long black hair and beards, and their bronzed complexions, and the old women, with their *belle laideur* (as Heine says of Madame

Viardot), waited on the ground with an air of dignity until their young dependants (or rather supporters) brought them tea and tobacco. Then the men began to smoke the long chibouk, and the old women once more called out for "Rom." The *traktirs* of the gipsies in Skin-them-alive Street are well—that is to say numerously—attended in the evening, and stories are told of young men who have ruined themselves in entertaining the inmates. (I have already said that the gipsies have made great progress in that sort of civilization which consists in drinking unlimited quantities of champagne.)

But although the songs of the gipsy companies may be heard in their own habitations, it is at public balls and concerts that the performers are heard and seen to the greatest advantage. The beauty of the young girls is very remarkable, and is only surpassed by the ugliness of the old women. Extreme delicacy of feature, and the power of expressing vividly every variety of emotion, are possessed by the young gipsies of Moscow as by no other women: in fact they form a gipsy aristocracy, and bear about the same resemblance to the gipsies of other parts that the racer does to the cart-horse. In repose they appear haughty and cold; but they are full of feeling and passion directly they begin to sing, and their songs belong to themselves as thoroughly as their costumes and their gestures. In attire they are to the gipsies of the fields what the picturesque is to the ludicrous, or the fanciful to the grotesque. They wear all colours, and always the most brilliant, such as no other people could appear in without producing the harshest effects. Instead of being clothed in rags, like their relatives of the plains, their dresses are of the richest materials, and I have said that all the women possess either beauty, or a sort of picturesque hideousness. The physiognomies of the youths are insipid as compared with those of the old men, which are strongly marked and full of character.

The gipsy songs are very melodious, and thoroughly original. M. Xavier Marmier tells us, in his interesting *Lettres sur la Russie*, that after hearing a party of gipsies at one of the Moscow clubs, he asked the chief of the troop for the music of some of the airs, to which the said chief is reported to have answered (in verse!) that "what came from the heart, could not be rendered visible to the eye"—or some similar absurdity. If the chief of any gipsy troop made such a reply, he perhaps deceived himself, but most certainly misled M. Marmier; for, of course, everything that can be sung can be noted, and all the melodies sung by the gipsies have been noted, published, and can be procured at all the Moscow music-shops, though it is quite true that they alone can sing them with proper effect. Like the Cossacks, and the vocal companies of many of the Russian regiments, the gipsies, when about to sing, form themselves into a circle, in the middle of which stands the principal vocalist of the band with the accompanyist, who also acts as leader, by his or her side. The instrument of the conductor is the *balalaika*, a kind of guitar. Every gipsy song is an "air with chorus;" and the chorus is sometimes accompanied or followed by a dance, in which the performers work themselves up to a state of excitement bordering upon frenzy, and indulge in the same convulsive movements which are said to characterize the dancing of the Bayadères. The words of many of the gipsy songs are touching from their very simplicity. A young girl tells how her lover gained her heart, how he swore to live for her alone, and how he "loves her no more;" and the refrain, "No, no more, he loves me no more," is repeated at the end of each verse by the chorus. Or she addresses to the nightingale a similar lament, and the chorus echoes, "O nightingale, sweetly-singing nightingale." Frequently the refrain is not in the same time (measure) as the air, and it is always executed more rapidly. The gipsies do not sing love-songs alone, but also drinking songs, and above all gipsy songs, in the

which the vocalist boasts emphatically that he is not a noble, nor a merchant, nor a peasant, nor a Tartar, but a gipsy, to whom the hat must be taken off; and then yells of delight and the maddest gestures proceed from the whole troop. I think I have already mentioned, in the chapter on Russian music, that what the Moscow and St. Petersburg music-publishers call gipsy melodies are often airs, written more or less in the gipsy style, by contemporary Russian composers. Those who are anxious to know more on the subject of gipsy music, may read and endeavour to understand M. Liszt's brilliant, and here and there really amusing little work, *Des Bohémiens et de leur Musique en Hongrie.*

In the *Etoile du Nord*, a so-called gipsy rondo is introduced, which is, in fact, nothing more than an ordinary polka. Perhaps Meyerbeer did not intend that the melody of his Russian gipsy should have any appropriate character; but if he did, he failed. The much-abused Verdi has been infinitely more successful with some portions of the music of the gipsy Azucena, for it must be remembered that in Russia, Spain, Sicily, wherever the gipsies sing, the airs are similar, and in some instances nearly identical. I have said that the inhabitants of Moscow are enthusiastic in their admiration of the gipsy troops. The great Catalani, according to a Moscow anecdote, after hearing the chief of one of them, took from her shoulders a shawl that had been given to her by the Russian Empress, and placed it on those of the gipsy-girl, as a tribute from art to nature. Mr. Borrow, led away, no doubt, by his philo-Bohemianism, says that Russia is the only country in which people know how to sing. It is a mistake to say that the Moscow gipsies are the best singers in the world, but certainly there are no singers like them.

CHAPTER XXI.

FACTORIES AND FOREIGNERS.

THE ancient political and religious capital of the Grand Princes and the Czars is now the centre of manufacturing Russia. The neighbourhood of the city of Moscow, indeed all the "Government" or province of that name, is full of print-works and cotton-mills of every kind. The region which has so often been devastated by Tartars, Poles, and, last of all, by the French, has now, to a great extent, fallen into the hands of "directors" from Manchester and Mulhouse. There are "fabrics" at Borodino, and within an easy shot of the once warlike monastery of the Troitza, and almost beneath the shadow of the white-walled Kremlin itself.

"Fabric," I must here mention, is a Moscow-English word, abbreviated from the Russian *fabrika*, itself no doubt derived from the French *fabrique*, in which sense the Moscow-English word is employed. For the English residents in Russia have a vocabulary of their own, which includes English words that are not applied in England as they apply them, and words that are not English at all, but which are quasi-Anglicized from the Russian. To these may be added a few words borrowed from the Russian without alteration, such as "typh" for typhus fever. Thus, in answer to your question, "What became of Mr. So-and-so, who was in love with Miss So-and-so, and quarrelled with her?" the answer might be, "Oh, he died of the 'typh,'"—a reply certainly calculated to mislead the interrogator if an Englishman of England. "*Vodka*" in the Anglo-Russian dialect is called "vodky," probably because the word is heard so often in the genitive case *vodki*, as in "a glass, a bottle of *vodka*,"

&c.; "*drojka*" becomes (as in French or German) "droshky," or "*droschky*;" "*peitchka*," a stove, is abbreviated into "peitch;" "*shouba*," a fur coat, or cloak with sleeves, into "shoub;" *copeika*, a coin equivalent to the hundredth part of a rouble, into "copeik," &c. Among the English words applied by the Moscow-English otherwise than as the English of England apply them, are "merchant," "magazine," "notes," "equipage," "lacquey," and the aforesaid "fabric." "Merchant," among those who associate with the upper and professional classes, is often used, as by the Russians themselves, almost as a term of contempt, and signifies a dealer of any kind, in a country where nearly all persons engaged in trade are vulgar and uneducated. To have the appearance or manners of a "merchant," to be dressed or to behave like the wife or daughter of a "merchant," is to be quite unfitted for polite society. "Magazine" is only an English adaptation of the Franco-Russian euphuism for "shop." By "notes" is meant the music that is sold at so much a sheet in "magazines"—called "music" in England and France, most absurdly, as if the sounds, and not merely the notes that represent them, were sold. An "equipage" is any kind of conveyance of the nature of a carriage. Thus the proprietor of a dilapidated *drojka* (or "droshky") offering to procure a piece of music for a young lady might say:

"My equipage is at the door; let me drive to the magazine and get you the notes."

A "lacquey" is any kind of footman.

A "fabric," as I have said, is any kind of factory.

Such a sentence as, "The footman says the carriage (or cab, or bench on wheels) is at the door; let us drive to the shop and get the music, after which we can go to the factory," would be rendered in Moscow-English thus: "The lacquey says the equipage is at the door; let us drive to the magazine and get the notes, after which we can go to the fabric."

I fancy the word "director" is itself a Russo-English word. At all events, I never heard it used in England in the sense of manager at a mill or factory; and I believe that in our manufacturing districts such establishments are invariably directed by the proprietors. In Russia, however, the capital with which the spinning, weaving, and printing "fabrics" are carried on is usually supplied by Russian speculators, though I am told that a great deal of Lancashire money, as well as Lancashire-American cotton, finds its way to the mills around Moscow. In any case it seldom happens that the owner of the mill, who is often the proprietor of the land on which it stands, is qualified to undertake its general management, which he accordingly confides to a director, who is usually a foreigner, and, if a foreigner, almost certainly either a Scotchman or an Englishman from the north of England. These English and Scotch directors do not at present receive such enormous salaries as were paid to them ten or twenty years since, when it was nearly impossible to find a Russian capable of doing their work, and when (as I imagine) the advantages presented by Russia as a money-making country were comparatively unknown to our manufacturing classes; but even now a director's salary in Russia is seldom less than six hundred a year, and is often twice or three times as much. I have little to say about the progress of manufactures in Russia that the reader cannot find for himself in the pages of Haxthausen, Tegoborski, and Gerebtzoff; nor would my opinion as to the work done at the Moscow fabrics be of any value in a technical sense, though I may mention that those competent to judge assured me it was steadily improving, and that such and such descriptions of cloth were now as well made in Moscow as anywhere.

But I suppose the great question is, what it can be sold for in the markets of the East? This is the "Eastern Question" of the future between Russia and England, and I quite believe that, almost before the Crimean war

was at an end, it already occupied the Russians more than the too-familiar political one.

To write about "the designs of Russia" it is not necessary to have visited the country or to know anything about it, but only to have studied the celebrated will of Peter the Great, or the less celebrated works of Mr. David Urquhart. Indeed, a very little acquaintance with what has been written and done in Russia since the accession of the present Emperor would teach those political prophets who confound Slavonians with Mongols, and who give to the Russians the attributes of the race from whose devastations they saved Europe, that, so far from accepting Peter's will (or what passes for it), they would gladly throw away much of what they have already inherited from their great reformer, beginning with serfdom, which owed its existence in an aggravated form to Peter's forcible introduction of the Western manufacturing system, and not ending with the table of *tchinns*, which was also one of Peter's inventions.

"You admire Peter the Great in the West," said a Russian to me the other day in London; "it is very natural, for he imitated what he saw among you: we look at him from a different point of view."

Peter imitated very little, in a political sense, from England; indeed one of his first important acts was to deprive the *boyars* of political power, and so to alter as practically to abolish the representative system which the first of the Romanoffs on his accession had sworn to maintain;* but he borrowed the notion of the table of ranks from the Germans, and in converting his rural aristocracy into a court nobility followed the example of Louis XIV.,† whose "L'Etat c'est moi" might have been

* See *Le Monde Slave* (*La Russie comme empire*), par Cyprien Robert.

† Of course, too, Voltaire's Life of Peter the Great had a considerable effect in producing the admiration with which this extraordinary man has been regarded ever since the publication of that work. When Dr. Poissonier, returning from Russia, where he had lived

Peter's own maxim, and whose despotic system—based on the illimitable will of the sovereign, and having for its corner-stone the Bastille—was seen in its worst phase by the Russian monarch under the Regency. By forcing the great landowners to leave their estates and take service at St. Petersburg, and by introducing the luxurious mode of life which he had so much admired in the French capital, and which as imitated at St. Petersburg was ruinously expensive, Peter founded a class of rack-rent absentee landlords; and as at the same time the peasants, who were already "assigned to the soil," but who cultivated it on comparatively easy terms, were made mere slaves, from whom any kind and any amount of labour might be demanded by their seigneurs, it is evident that his great reform cannot have improved the material condition of the labouring population. Many writers of the present day, especially those of the old Russian party, maintain that it had a very pernicious effect on the aristocracy, whom, while giving them a superficial and corrupt civilization, it quite denationalized; but all Russians of strong national sympathies, whether Republicans like Mr. Herzen, or Absolutists like M. Gerebtzoff, seem to agree with Miçkievicz, the Polish poet, in thinking that in a moral sense the peasants were not affected by it at all; and hence the seeming paradox to me, which, with a certain party in Russia, has become almost a truism—that the best qualities of the nation are to be found among the lowest class,* who, oppressed and ill-treated as they may have been, have still been in the habit of managing their own affairs in the village communes, and, above all, have never lost their religious belief, nor, consequently, their faith in one

many years, asked Voltaire why he had written so much that was false or exaggerated in favour of that country, the latter is said to have replied, "*Ils m'ont donné de bonnes pelisses, et je suis très frileux.*"—*Moliere Musicien*, par C. Blaze. Vol. II. p. 54.

* See, in many places, Miçkievicz's Lectures on the Slavonians (*Les Slaves, cours professé au collège de France*).

another. We in the West do indeed, as my friend assured me, think too much of Peter the Great's reforms, for the general opinion among us is that civilization in Russia dates only from his reign. Russians, however, who know the history of their country, will tell us, with M. de Gerebtzoff, that if the natural progress of Russian civilization had not been violently checked, and the institutions on which it was founded abolished, by Peter the Great, they would not now be struggling with such terrible evils as serfdom; a system of artificial ranks which nurtures a spirit of intrigue and paralyzes the real activity of all who enter the state service; and the notorious venality of all actual state employés. The labouring classes were, of course, not directly represented a century and three-quarters ago in the House of Boyars (*Douma*), or in the Chamber of Landed Proprietors (*Zemskoi-Sabor*), but they would have benefited with the rest of the nation by the existence of these representative and legislative assemblies, instead of being made, from peasants assigned to the soil, serfs in the full sense of the word, and after Peter's time slaves exchangeable and saleable like cattle.

I fancy, in spite of what enthusiastic Russians say about the strength, intelligence, and true-heartedness of their peasants, and of this class having preserved its moral character and its patriarchal simplicity, while those above it were aping the manners and adopting the morals of luxurious, dissipated, and infidel foreigners, that they must have certainly suffered morally, as well as materially and intellectually, by the partial, one-sided reforms introduced by Peter. As to the intellectual part of the question, it is quite certain that their schools were abolished. In a very interesting paper read last year to the Statistical Society of London by Mr. Koloomzin, described, in the Society's Journal for December, 1859, as "a young Russian of rank," the author, after speaking of the evil of replacing institutions rooted in the habits of the people by new ones that have not the sympathies of the

nation and are strange to it, says :* "Such was the case with our educational system; down to Peter the Great it had been linked to the people, and was carried on by the study of the Slavonian language and the Bible, generally in elementary schools which were accessible to the people. Peter the Great and his successors abandoned this system, the mass of the people was left to itself, and the schools perished in neglect one after the other. The reform of Peter the Great affected only the higher classes. Schools and cadet corps were established for them, not for general education, but with the view of forming specialities who were wanted by the Government as military and naval officers, engineers, and others . . . . An academy was founded to which were attached almost exclusively German professors, who had often not even a knowledge of the Russian language."†

* Journal of the Statistical Society, December, 1859. The paper is printed as Mr. Koloomzin wrote it, without any corrections.

† The academies of Kieff and Moscow were the oldest important educational establishments in Moscow. The present University of Moscow was founded by the Empress Elizabeth, a little more than a hundred years ago. Catherine II. established secondary schools, or gymnasiums, of which the number was augmented by Alexander. A few elementary schools (Mr. Koloomzin tells us) were also founded by him and by Nicholas, "but they are still scarce, and down to the present day there are hardly any means for the mass of the people of having any instruction at all except by private teaching." The Russian educational system consists of parochial schools in small towns and in most of the Crown villages; of elementary district schools in most of the district and provincial or government towns (*i. e.* chief towns of governments or provinces); of gymnasiums in all the provincial towns, and of universities. The obligatory annual payment at the Moscow University is not more than £8 a year, and a great many of the students (who live in their own lodgings, but are answerable for their conduct to the University authorities, and to them only) receive subsidies from money left to the University by charitable persons and from the amount of the annual payments of all the students. The students, too, as a corporation, have their own funds, from which any student may borrow money, either for a certain time, or with the moral obligation of returning it when possible. I may add (what Mr. Koloomzin does not

This was, indeed, despotism cutting down the tree to get at the fruit, but the Russians of the old Russian party would not, I think, admit that the peasants' morality necessarily suffered from the abolition of their schools. Indeed, M. de Gerebtzoff is fond of speaking of their "immorality of (mere) knowledge," (*l'immoralité du savoir*), and invites us to choose between the position of the cleanly, industrious, unlettered, but not ignorant peasants of Central Russia, with their comfortable cottages and their well-cultivated plots of ground, and that of the dirty, idle, miserable peasants of the Baltic provinces, who, for the most part, are taught to read and write.

I can say nothing upon this question myself. Indeed, the only opportunity I had of learning anything positive and at first hand concerning a portion of the labouring class in Russia, was at the "fabrics" I visited in the neighbourhood of Moscow, and again near the Troitza monastery. I may here observe that, although there are plenty of curious and characteristic scenes which a writer may describe effectively and even truthfully after a few days' residence in St. Petersburg or Moscow (indeed, the shorter time the better for such a purpose), to be able to speak with any authority about the condition of the Russian peasantry, it is essential that the visitor should have travelled through all parts of the empire, and that he should have had free and constant access to all kinds of persons—landholders, officials, and the peasants themselves. No foreigner that I know of, who has written about Russia, has enjoyed these advantages except Baron Haxthausen, who, it is true, did not understand the language, but who was attended constantly by an interpreter, and received all necessary aid from the Russian

mention) that pupils who have passed a satisfactory examination at a gymnasium may, if they please, become students at one of the universities without payment, on condition of giving their services afterwards to the Government for a fixed period as teachers or professors.

Government to enable him to pursue his inquiries in a systematic manner. He lived upwards of a year in the country, was a man of scientific habits of mind; and whereas the vain and ignorant Marquis de Custine, who spent about six weeks in Russia, boasts that he "saw nothing, but guessed everything," it may be said in praise of Baron Haxthausen, that he guessed nothing and saw as much as possible. And yet, after all, Baron Haxthausen seems not to have understood the organization of the Russian commune,* and many Russians have assured me that he has given too favourable a picture of the position of the peasants, and (for instance) that he was greatly in error in supposing that every peasant's hut was furnished with a tea-urn, and that many of them were rich enough to drink tea (which is at least twice as dear in Russia as in England) habitually.

But to return to the introduction of the manufacturing system into Russia by Peter the Great. As manufacturing industry increased, and the Government everywhere invited the nobles to establish factories, they employed their serfs as workmen. "But," says Haxthausen, "it was soon discovered that every Russian is a bad workman when subject to statute-labour, but a good one, or capable of becoming so, when he works on his own account. Permission was therefore given to the serfs to seek work wherever they could find it, and in return a tax was imposed upon them."

The serfs employed at the "fabrics" about Moscow pay an *obrok*, or poll-tax, to their proprietors of—as a general rule—about ten roubles a year, though there is no law to prevent an avaricious proprietor from demanding as much more as he thinks fit. Practically, however, the difference between the pecuniary position of a serf-workman and that of a free workman employed in factory labour, is found to be that the former receives for his

* See the Appendix to Mr. Herzen's work, *Du Développement des Idées Révolutionnaires en Russie.*"

own use about thirty-three shillings a year less than the latter, with the certainty that he will be provided for in his old age, or whenever, no matter from what cause, he may be compelled to retire to his native village. In 1856 and 1857, the average wages of ordinary spinners, weavers, and printers, were about ten roubles, or thirty-three shillings and fourpence, per month, and they were provided with free lodging at the mill. Of course they bought their own food, which was good, their dinner consisting of soup, beef, and a kind of porridge made with the flour of buckwheat and called *kasha*. I must add that beef costs in Moscow less than half what it costs in London (in 1857 it was threepence a pound), and, on the other hand, that wages had been nearly doubled by the war.

The sleeping accommodation for the workmen was of the most primitive kind. The dormitories were fitted up with an immense inclined plane of wood, which rested against the wall, and extended from one side of the building to the other. On this simple bed, and without bed-clothes, but attired in the shirt and trousers which constitute the ordinary indoor wear of the Russian *moujik*, the workmen lie in a row—"close together like spoons," as the proprietor of a fabric observed to me. I don't say that they are to be pitied for not having night-dresses and bed-clothes, for their customs are not those of our working-men, and I believe they sleep at the fabrics very much as they are in the habit of sleeping at home in their own villages. However, at every fabric there is a bath for them—not an immersion-bath, but the real scraping and boiling bath of the country, such as I have described in a preceding chapter—and every Saturday afternoon is given up to bathing. I was told that the operatives' morning ablutions were of a slight and hasty nature, but that they were regularly performed. Both men and women certainly looked clean; they were generally dressed with neatness, and in their bright-coloured

clothes, the men with their hair kept back by a narrow circular band, the women with theirs tied up in red or yellow handkerchiefs, presented a picturesque appearance, such as one would look in vain for in the gloomy mill-interiors of Lancashire, where the faces are all black with smoke, and where the women's hair is fluffy with the fluff off the cotton that is everywhere flying about. It must be remembered that the Moscow fabrics, instead of being huddled together in smoky clusters, stand "in their own grounds," as the house-agents say, and that wood is the only fuel consumed, coal not being procurable.

But if the operatives I saw looked well, it was not because they were not overworked, for the hours are long at all the fabrics, and cruelly so at some of them. These establishments are, for the most part, very profitable speculations, and the proprietors are determined to make as much as possible out of them during the shortest space of time. At the greater number, two sets of hands are employed (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., and from 6 P.M. to 6 A.M.), and the engine is kept going all day except for a few minutes, when it is stopped for greasing purposes. Under this system, and allowing for the time given to meals, the hours of labour are, to be sure, scarcely longer than at our own factories (supposing that the Ten Hours' Act is strictly observed at all of them); but at the "fabrics" where only one set of hands is employed, only eight hours' rest is allowed to the unfortunate operatives, who commence at four in the morning and do not leave off work until eight at night. The Government is careful about the fencing of machinery, but seems to have paid no attention to the labour question.

On the other hand, the Russian workman has a prodigious number of holidays in the year. He has Sundays, Saturday afternoons, and about three *fête*-days every fortnight, on which no work is done at any of the mills. He takes holidays (with the rest of the population) for

several days at Easter, and usually receives his accumulated wages at that great festival—confining himself, during the rest of the year, to drawing occasionally small sums on account.

The winter is the active period of the year at the Russian fabrics, and during the summer, when the peasants are all engaged in agricultural pursuits, there is often much difficulty in obtaining a sufficient supply of labour.

I was anxious to see some of the workmen at their midday meal (the composition of which I have already described), and was much interested in learning their system of provisioning. The workmen elect one caterer or steward, who buys for all, presides at the general banquet, and is re-eligible every month. Those who are acquainted with the organization of the Russian commune, are aware that the associative principle is thoroughly understood in Russia, and that what is a dream in France, and Germany, and England, is there a reality. It has been mentioned as a curious anomaly, that when the Emperor Nicholas, the most despotic sovereign of his time, was in England, he offered Robert Owen every facility (including a large grant of land) for founding a colony in Russia, to be organized and conducted on his own associative plan. The Emperor probably reflected that all the Russian peasants possessed and cultivated property in common, both in the crown villages and on private estates, and that there are numerous villages in Russia where the inhabitants work co-operatively at some special local trade. It will be said that a first-rate workman (a cobbler of the highest class, for instance) must be prevented by the co-operative system from rising to that eminence which he might attain under a system of free competition. There are, however, overlookers to be appointed, and if common labourers are not competent to choose legislators, they can, at all events, be trusted to judge of the merits of their fellow-workmen *as* work-

men. However, the associations of operatives at the Russian fabrics are formed only with a view to buying provisions on the cheapest terms, and cannot offend any theorist, or indeed any one at all, except, perhaps, the neighbouring butchers and bakers, who would evidently gain more money if each workman bought his food separately. "Communism" has been defined by Proudhon as "the religion of poverty;" the Russian workmen, however, only prove themselves to understand true economy in forming these associations for joint purchases.

The reader may, perhaps, think that I attach too much importance to having found a number of workmen at some Russian cotton-mills clubbing together to buy beef and bread? It seemed to show, however, what I had often been told by Russians of all opinions, that the Russian peasants are a sensible, dutiful, well-behaved, manageable class, having confidence in one another, and respecting, as individual members of a community in which each member has a voice, the general decision of that community. They know how to co-operate, they know how to elect, and they know how to abide by their election. Only in small matters, it may be said; but it is not such a small matter to elect a *starosta* who governs an entire commune and represents the peasants belonging to it in their dealings with the proprietor; and even the manner in which they choose and obey their stewards at the fabrics shows that they have reached a state of civilization (of a moral order, at least) for which they get no credit in the West of Europe.

But I was about to say that I was present while the workmen at one of the fabrics took their dinner. The president of the mess sat with his back to the wall, the others placing themselves on each side of him and before him in a circle. He crossed himself by way of grace, an example which was followed by all present, then helped the soup, cut up the beef into as many portions as there

were guests, served out the *kasha;* in short, did all the honours of the repast.

I received the same account everywhere of the capabilities of the Russian workmen. A few complained that they were lazy if not overlooked, which I suppose most workmen are who are paid by time; but all agreed that they were intelligent and skilful. At some print-works directed by a nephew of one of the chief manufacturers of Mulhouse, I saw several workmen who had only just ceased to be agriculturists, printing many-coloured* patterns by hand, and I was told that they did this difficult kind of block-printing most satisfactorily. Others in the same "fabric" had learnt in a very short time to engrave the patterns on the metal rollers of the machines.

"They will do anything if you only show them how," said the director kindly, but with an air of great superiority. "*Des singes, Monsieur, de véritables singes!*" he added, but without mentioning any instances of monkeys having distinguished themselves at block-printing or machine-engraving.

There are shops as well as factories in Moscow directed by foreigners, though all the booths in the oriental *Gastinnoi Dvor* (where each trade has its separate alley) are in the hands of Russians.

In the Blacksmith's Bridge, the principal street in Moscow, all the best and handsomest shops belong to the French, who are chiefly vendors of gloves, silks, and "articles de Paris." There is a shop for the sale of English needles, and in a side-street there is an "English magazine" (named, I suppose, after the celebrated one on the Nevsky Prospect at St. Petersburg) which is full of English cutlery. Also there are English brushes at

* The Russians get from their Transcaucasian provinces not only cotton (which, however, as at present grown and manufactured, is apt to break in the spinning), but a kind of madder, which gives a much deeper and richer dye than either the French or the Turkish madders.

the French silk-mercer's and perfumer's, and there is English porter to be had at the Russo-German beer-cellars. The pastrycooks' shops are kept by Frenchmen, Germans, and Russians, but all the confectionery is made by Russians, who, after the orientals, prepare it better than any people. The bakers are generally Germans (and the Russian bread is as good and delicate as that of Vienna). The apothecaries are all Germans, and the sausage-shops are kept so notoriously by Germans, that a Russian street-boy, wishing to insult any foreigner, calls him a "pudding-eater," which means a sausage-eater, which signifies a German.

Most of the music-masters are German.

The drawing-masters are generally Russian.

There are several French fencing-masters.

The hair-dressers are all French. Indeed, add one more to the four Frenchmen seen by Hoffman, in the market-place of Berlin, and we have the five typical Frenchmen of all foreign towns, where we always find a French hair-dresser, a French dancing-master, a French fencing-master, a French teacher of languages, and a French cook. This reminds me that there are French restaurants and hotels in Moscow. There are no English eating-houses, and I congratulate the Muscovites upon it.

Among the doctors are Englishmen, Frenchmen, and German, as well as Russians. There are English, French, and German governesses, but English governesses seem to be the most sought after, and there are many English tutors.

So much has already been written about the governess question—about the low salaries of governesses (without, however, considering how many of them may be unqualified for the duties they assume)—about the indignities they have to submit to (but without any account being given of those who are treated with all possible consideration)—that it would be superfluous for me to join in

the general chorus of commiseration which the various narratives of their sufferings have called forth. And, by the way, if every one pities these ladies in black silk dresses (a costume which no sensible governess ought to wear, now that it has been so thoroughly vulgarized by fourth-rate novelists and mere painters for effect), who is it that behaves so badly to them? In Russia, the liberality and kindness with which English governesses are treated, has often been noticed; but it must be remembered that those families in which great attention is paid to the bringing-up of the children, and in which the services of an efficient English governess would be likely to be retained, are generally the best, by birth, education, and position (by which I do not mean official position), in the country, and have had at least a century or so of European culture.* It is not by persons of this, or rather of a corresponding class, that the feelings of governesses are disregarded in England, but by snobs of newly-acquired wealth, snobs of aristocratic pretensions, and snobs of what M. de Gerebtzoff calls "a deplorable rusticity of manners." For the snob is essentially the same in all countries, call him as you will,—a snob, an *épicier*,† a

* Whatever may be said about the demoralizing effect of the introduction of Western manners on the old Russian nobility, I cannot fancy an English young lady of the period caring to become a governess in such a family as that of the Russian nobleman of the olden time whose life I have described in Chapter VI.

† I respect the grocer when he does not adulterate his goods, but *épicier* also means, as many of my readers are aware, any low-minded person who (to apply Mr. Thackeray's definition of the snob) "admires mean things meanly." In a book on Russia, it may not be out of place to mention the derivation of the word *épicier* in the sense in which I have just used it. In France, under the old *régime*, the magistrates and members of the Parliament who received bribes took them in the form of *épices*—generally sugar-loaves, such as the maltreated shopkeepers offer to the supposed "Revizor" in Gogol's comedy of that name. Hence a bribe-taker who would sacrifice his honour for a loaf of sugar was called an *épicier*. There are a great many *épiciers* in Russia.

philister, or a *khlisch*, his Russian name. Still I believe the author of "Russia by a Recent Traveller" to be right when he asserts that governesses are nowhere better treated than in Russia. They seem to associate on terms of perfect equality with the family, to share all their pleasures, and even to visit and receive invitations, with them. This takes place in a society from which merchants, however rich, are, with rare exceptions, entirely excluded. I do not altogether admire this rule, and in fact mention it here to prove that the Russians are themselves by no means devoid of class pride. Only their classes are differently divided from ours, and their pride is of a different kind, and they do not undervalue people who are mentally and morally their equals, because they are, to some extent, dependent upon them for their means of living.

People devoid of correct moral notions and of all honourable feeling—moral idiots, in short—may suggest that teachers are held in greater estimation in Russia than in England, because in the former country their acquirements are rarer; in other words, that the Russians in this respect prove themselves highly civilized, because they have only arrived at an imperfect state of civilization!

I have said that the Russian "factories" are chiefly directed by Englishmen. Englishmen, too, manage most of the important iron-works (Baird, the iron-founder of St. Petersburg, has one entire quarter of the city to himself), there are English engineers on the steamers of the Black Sea and of the Volga, and the general steam-service of the Volga is or was under the direction of an Englishman. All the trainers, jockeys, and grooms, with but few exceptions, are English. The coachmen are not English, for in driving the Russians have nothing to learn. There are a few Russian jockeys, but at the races on the Petrovsky plains, close to Moscow, they seldom win anything. Indeed, if there is any chance of a Russian jockey coming in first,

the English jockeys will, at any risk, combine to spoil his horse's running.

There are Englishmen in the Russian army; as for Frenchmen I cannot say; but Russian officers with unmistakable English faces used sometimes to make their appearance at the English church in Moscow. Every one knows that there are Germans in the Russian military service, and there are hosts of them in the civil service, into which I do not think any Englishman or Frenchman would willingly enter, though the French in their way are also great bureaucrats; only they are not confirmed bribe-takers.

"A very civilizing effect all these foreigners must have upon the Russians," I fancy I hear some reader complacently observe.

They certainly give them good bread and good knives to cut it with; good scissors and good hair-dressers to wield them; professors who teach them to dance, play, and sing; tutors and governesses from whom they learn to speak French, German, and English, as well as, in the present day not better than, Russian; engineers and manufacturers who are showing them what to do with their iron and their flax, and how to make their imported and home-grown cotton into handkerchiefs and shirts for the Chinese. Finally, they are blessed with Germans to see that they have their passports in good order.

"But ideas?" These foreigners go to Russia with one idea, that of making money. When they return home, if they have been successful they praise Russia; if not they abuse it. But their praise is worse than their abuse. Caring only for their own comfort, or I will even add the comfort of those around them, they do not perceive the evils of despotism, and deny their existence. They live well, enjoy themselves, see nothing of the knout, of which they have heard so much before coming to Russia, and soon find that there is about as much chance of their being sent to Siberia as to the moon. Instead of the

miserable serf groaning beneath the lash of his task-master, they see a peasant who has a cottage, a plot of ground which he calls and considers his own, and a horse and cow which are equally his own, but which the proprietor of the village will have to replace if either of them dies; and who, in exchange for these advantages, works three days a week for his master, having the other four for himself, unless, indeed, he liberates himself from all statute-labour by paying annually, in the form of a poll-tax (*obrok*), (which might just as well be called rent), a sum seldom exceeding thirty-three shillings a year. Thereupon, the liberal foreigner, intent on making his fortune, decides (if he is really making it) that a great deal of nonsense is talked about Russia and the Russian serfs; that it would be a good thing for some of our starving poor if *they* were as well off as the peasants near Moscow; that Russia is an excellent country to live in, if you will only leave the Government alone, and why shouldn't you leave it alone? &c.

"The Emperor Nicholas was a good Sovereign," said a very well-meaning Englishman to me one day, who had lived twenty years in Russia, and assured me, as if in proof of the excellence of its institutions, that during that time he had never had the least trouble with his passport; "he was a good Sovereign — *he knew how to keep his country in order.*"

M. Cyprien Robert has written a few lines on this subject, which I may here appropriately quote. "It is falsely asserted," he says, in his *Monde Slave*,* "that liberalism advances in Russia by the aid of foreigners who find employment there—nothing of the kind. The majority of these foreigners are Germans, worshippers of the golden calf, who have come to Slavonia to fill their purses as quickly as possible, and go back again to their own hearths. Such mercenaries, indifferent to all politi-

* Vol. i. p. 211.

cal systems, are generally the most docile instruments of despotism. Accordingly the Russian liberals look upon them with profound disdain. In Russia it is only the indigenous or Slavonian element which can bring about the emancipation of all."

It may be asked, in what position the English residents found themselves placed during the war? They were in the first instance, informed that if they wished to remain in Russia they must become Russian subjects. These conditions, however, being generally refused, they were required to sign a paper by which they acknowledged themselves amenable in all matters to the Russian law. I cannot understand how this altered their position, except that for some offences (such as speaking against the Government) a Russian might be sent into exile, while a foreigner, under ordinary circumstances, would be conveyed to the nearest point on the frontier and ordered across it. I remember reading in Moscow, in 1856, a paragraph in an English paper to the effect that Mr. G. A. Sala, the future author of "A Journey due North," had had his papers taken from him, that his letters to his friends had been intercepted, and that, after being worried and maltreated in various ways by the Russian police, he had "succeeded in reaching the frontier!" I afterwards found out that this story, like many similar ones, was false in every particular, and without one atom of foundation; but it struck me at the time that the hero of it would not have had much trouble in "reaching the frontier" if he had really rendered himself obnoxious to the Russian Government.

While the war was in progress Englishmen were still allowed to return home, with the exception, I believe, of some English engineers, who had been serving on Russian steamers in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azoff; and those who could show that important business called them to England, for a short time only, had passports given them enabling them to re-enter Russia.

An interesting story was told me of a mechanical engineer who, being employed at some government works, was told to make certain screws, which he believed were intended to be used for boring cannon. He refused to obey the order, threw up a lucrative situation, asked for his passport, and left the country. At Vienna he fell ill and had to part with his watch. At Hamburgh, not having enough money to pay for his passage to London, he was obliged to sell a portion of his clothes. Arrived in England, and burning with rage at the thought of what had occurred to him since the unjust order, or at all events the order he was too patriotic to obey, had been given to him at St. Petersburg, he resolved to take personal vengeance on Russia as an empire, and to meet her troops face to face with those arms which he had declined to assist her in forging for the destruction of his own countrymen. He accordingly enlisted and went out to the Crimea, where, however, he did not arrive until after the fall of Sebastopol. What became of him afterwards I don't know. All I know is, that he must have been a very discontented sort of person, that he never could have understood anything about the laws of political economy, and that while he was indignantly refusing to assist in making hostile cannon at St. Petersburg, some much richer and doubtless much more enlightened men than he were actually building hostile steam-ships in the Clyde and in the Thames.

It was thought that the English merchants in St. Petersburgh would lose terribly by the war; for as they were unable to ship goods at any Russian port, they were obliged to have their tallow, &c., sent overland from the interior to Kovno on the Prussian frontier, whence it was conveyed through Prussia to Memel, and forwarded by Prussian vessels, there shipped on for London. These merchants made contracts with persons in the east of Russia, whom they had never seen and never saw, paying for the goods in bills on St. Petersburg.

They had no means of verifying the invoices, for the tallow did not pass near the capital, yet I was assured by a merchant that they never lost a cask, or received any complaints of short weight. This was the experience of a firm which during the war exported some twenty thousand casks of tallow, costing them twenty-five pounds per ton.

To conclude this subject, I may mention that after the declaration of war Count Zagrevsky, the Governor-General of Moscow, signified to the minister of the English church the necessity of his omitting from the Litany the prayer that Her Majesty's arms may be blessed with "victory over all her enemies." The Rev. Mr. Grey replied that he must read all the prayers or none, and at the same time appealed to the Emperor at St. Petersburg. The Emperor Nicholas at once gave Mr. Grey permission to read the service of his church without any alteration or omission.

CHAPTER XXII.

SUPPLEMENTARY.

I HAVE almost finished these Russian sketches, and find that as yet I have not said a word about droshkies, reviews, horn-bands, the secret police, or the knout—the five great subjects which have furnished so many descriptions and reflections to the tourists of the last fifty years. Let me at once supply these omissions.

(1.) The old droshky—which is simply a stuffed bench on wheels and without springs—is gradually disappearing. It was certainly the most awkward "equipage" (the Russians, as I have said, call it an equipage!) ever devised; and if, as a St. Petersburg legend sets forth, an English traveller once offered a thousand roubles to whoever would construct a vehicle more generally incommodious, I can easily understand how it happened that the reward was never claimed.

(2.) The reviews have been described with more or less enthusiasm by almost every traveller, military or civil; but Adam Miçkieviecz, the great enemy of Absolute Russia, has given a description of one, the like of which has never been seen, and which I will here reproduce :—

"An immense place—some call it a kennel, for it is here that the Tzar trains his bloodhounds before letting them loose against his victims; others, more polite, call it a *boudoir*, for it is here that the Tzar tries on his costumes before going out, bristling with muskets, pikes, and cannons, to receive the adoration of monarchs. A coquette, preparing to appear at a court ball, does not

RUSSIAN CONSCRIPTS

Receiving their parents' blessing on quitting the Village.

stand so long before the glass, does not inflict upon herself so many mummeries and contortions, as the Tzar commits every day on the parade-ground. Others, however, only look upon it as a nursery of locusts. It is here, they dare to assert, that the Tzar raises the seeds of those clouds of locusts, who, after receiving sufficient cultivation, are one day to take flight and invade the world. Others, again, prefer to call it a surgeon's cabinet, for it is here that the Tzar sharpens his lancets prior to stretching out his hand from St. Petersburg or Moscow, and cutting to the quick, so that all Europe will utter a cry of pain."

Already a circle of spectators surrounds the plain like the banks of a vast lake. A few dragoons and Cossacks skim over the ground like swallows over the water. A dull rumbling is heard as of distant thunder, monotonous as the blows of a hammer. Behind the drums march through the various avenues long files of troops. Each column flows like a river, and they engulf themselves all together in the plain as in a vast reservoir.

"And now, muse," exclaims the Polish poet, "lend me the mouths of a hundred Homers, and in each of them place a hundred Parisian women's tongues; lend me the pens of all the clerks in the universe to register the names of all these colonels, all these officers, all these sub-officers, and all these heroes of the ranks. But, O grief! all the illustrious warriors resemble one another so much! they are so monotonous! The troops are drawn up soldier against soldier, like rows of horses ruminating at the same racks, or like sheaves of corn arranged along the furrows of the field, or rather like the furrows themselves; they might also be said to be like the verses of a bad poem, unless it be thought better to compare them to the conversations of the St. Petersburg saloons. . . . To distinguish all the regiments in this mass of infantry it would be necessary to borrow the penetrating eye of

the naturalist, who studies the vermicules found in the mud, classes them in families, and gives them names."

Then, more varied in aspect, the cavalry appear :—

"Lancers, hussars, and dragoons, in *tchapkas, kolpaks,* and helmets; and, last of all, a regiment of giants encased in brass, like a row of tea-urns, the heads of their chargers hanging down like spouts. The first regiment which debouches is black; so is the second, only the horses have short tails; then come two bay regiments with the same distinction; the fifth is iron-grey, the sixth chestnut, the seventh dark chestnut, the eighth piebald, the ninth of lofty stature, the tenth of middle size; then black with rats' tails, then black with white stars on the foreheads, and the last raven-black. . . .

"There are forty-eight field-pieces in line, and about double the number of caissons. The green uniforms* fill the plain like the grass of the meadows at the beginning of spring; here and there a caisson of the same colour is seen, like a large field-bug, and close to it crouches a field-piece, like a dark spider. Each of the spiders has four feet before and four behind; these are the artillerymen. . . . At last the Tzar precipitates himself among the ranks like the ball in a game of skittles, and exclaims to all this mass, 'Hail to you!' 'We wish you health!' murmur the soldiers in reply; and the sound is like the growling of a hundred thousand bears. . . .

"Three hundred drums beat, and, like the ice of the Neva when the thaw begins, the infantry divides itself into oblong columns. The Tzar is in the centre like the sun, and the regiments turn and gravitate around him like the planets. . . . Suddenly the Tzar sends off a flock of aides-de-camp. Like sparrows escaping from a cage, or like a pack of hounds let loose, they rush forward, shout at the top of their voices, and then nothing is heard but the commands of the generals, the

* This was before the introduction of the grey capote.

majors, and the sergeants, the rolling of the drums, and the shrill whistle of the fifes. And in an instant, as straight and as stiff as the tightly-drawn cable of the anchor just cast into the sea, the infantry stands in line of battle."

Then we are told how the cavalry rush "like hounds excited by the huntsman's horn" upon the infantry—how the infantry, doubling on itself, forms into a square "with its bayonets standing on end like the quills of a hedgehog"—how the cavalry in the heat of the charge suddenly halts, as if held in a leash—how the cannons are moved to the front, then taken back to the rear—how there are reprimands in French and insults in Russian—how these are arrested and those knocked down—how some freeze and others are thrown from their horses—and, finally, what felicitations are addressed to the Tzar.

The review is at an end, but still the Tzar will not leave the ground. He calls back his grey, black, or chestnut regiments, orders his infantry once more into line of battle, forms it again into squares, and deploys it into fans. "Like an old gambler, who, finding himself without a partner, shuffles the cards, cuts them and shuffles them again, while the company leave him to amuse himself alone, the Tzar still takes a pleasure in playing with his soldiers."

Having, with the aid of a great poet, disposed of the review, I now come (3) to the horn-bands, of which, however, most of the Russians to whom I spoke on the subject knew nothing—some carrying their ignorance so far as never to have heard of them. Yet all who have read a few works on Russia must be aware that the Russian horn-band is the indispensable musical accompaniment to every animated description of the Neva in summer. M. Le Maistre set the fashion in his picturesque introduction to the philosophical discourses, entitled

"*Les Soirées de St. Pétersbourg*," and the music he heard fifty years ago among the green islands of the transparent river will probably be echoed for years to come. I believe, too, that a genuine Russian horn-band, formed after the original model described by M. Le Maistre, visited London about the time of the Great Exhibition; but then I have also heard, in London, German musicians, who, with their voices alone, produced all sorts of extraordinary sounds; and in some parts of Russia there are singers who, by a skilful use of the lips, can imitate any instrument in the orchestra, and who thus will execute overtures by Rossini, and render perfectly the character of the orchestration. In the celebrated but now scarce, if not extinct horn-bands, each performer played but one note; and as he practised it all his life, it may be presumed that he at last knew how to give it with proper effect. This arrangement was more curious than philosophical. It is evident that a flowing legato passage could not be adequately rendered by a series of detached notes, each played on a different instrument. Of the brutality of converting human beings into animated organ-pipes it is scarcely necessary to speak. M. Le Maistre saw in the Russian horn-band the symbol of order: the units of sound taken by themselves have no meaning, but let the players be blindly obedient to their conductor, and the result will be harmonious music. Like the statue of Peter the Great, however, the horn-band has suggested the most opposite reflections; and, symbolism apart, there was actual despotism of the worst kind in degrading men who might have been musicians into mechanical horn-blowers. People who have never heard of Bortniansky and Glinka, speak of the Russian horn music as if it were the only remarkable thing in a musical sense that the country had ever produced. But there never could have been many of these absurd orchestras, and when I was in Russia I was unable to obtain any

information as to where one of them was to be, or might be, or had been, heard.

(4.) Of the secret police I have no intention to say much. If every one knew all about it, it would not be secret; and, as far as I know myself, I never came into contact with it. I can answer for one thing, however, that it does not have the effect of checking conversation on political matters. One writer after another repeats that in Russian society only the most frivolous subjects are discussed, and that the effect of proscribing all topics of importance has been to make every Russian a gambler. It appeared to me that the Russians talked more, and more openly, about politics, than any other people in Europe, except the English. A glance at the contents of their reviews will show that the subjects which principally occupy the writers are connected with the material, moral, and intellectual progress of their own country; and as journalists and critics write, so people in society talk. As for gambling, that is generally an affair of direct inclination, like drinking, or any other vice. During Alexander the First's reign, and still more during Catherine's, the gambling among the Russian nobility was excessive; but Catherine, the friend of Voltaire and D'Alembert, and who, when the *Encyclopédie* was forbidden in France, wished it to be continued in Russia, certainly did not prohibit free discussion. She herself talked freely to all travellers of distinction who visited Russia, answered the questions of many of them in writing, and, while generally endeavouring to exhibit the country in as favourable a light as possible, told, with much that was good, a great deal that was bad, and which might easily have been concealed.* Numbers of books —for instance, Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*, and the writings of Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Diderot—had free

* See, for instance, Catherine's frank answers to a long paper of questions submitted to her by Archdeacon Coxe, *Travels in Russia, &c.*

though doubtless a small circulation in Russia during Catherine's reign, whereas under Nicholas many of the works of the French philosophers were specially forbidden, and could not legally be received by any one but university professors. Yet it is quite certain that no such gambling was known in Nicholas's time as took place during that of Catherine. Besides, it was not inability to talk politics that made Fox the greatest gambler of his epoch, any more than it was tyranny that caused Pitt to drink considerable quantities of port-wine. As to the extent to which gambling prevails in Russia at the present day, it seemed to me, from all I observed and could hear, that it had gone very much out of fashion, though many families had anecdotes to tell of some relative or friend who at no very distant period had been ruined by play. At present, even in the clubs, very little card-playing takes place, and games of hazard are strictly forbidden. I do not mean to say that Russian society is without its vices, any more than that of any other country; but that, instead of playing at cards, the Russians of the capitals seem just now to read, talk, go to the opera, or amuse themselves at home with music or dancing. Whatever sins the secret police may be guilty of, I do not think it can be charged with encouraging gambling, or with checking discussion on political subjects. (It must be remembered, that to discuss the relations of Russia with France, Austria, and England; to speak of the emancipation question, the advantage of publicity in legal processes, the infamy of Russian officials, and the necessity of altering certain Russian laws, is a very different thing from proposing to subvert the existing Government.) One effect of the police system in France is to deprive the owner or tenant of a house from living in it as if the house really belonged to him; thus, he is not allowed to receive fifty guests without the express permission of the authorities. No such absurd

restriction is known in Russia. Every one is aware that a regular corps of spies is employed in Russia, but it is far from having the paralyzing effect on social intercourse that is generally imagined. On the other hand, the ordinary police, which does nothing secretly, but robs openly in the face of day, is unmistakably oppressive. I have already spoken of their shameless extortions. It will be understood how systematically these are practised when I mention, that in Moscow there are thirty-six kvartalnys (corresponding to the French *commissaires du quartier*); that each of these functionaries pays or ought to pay for his lodging, keeps two or three horses, employs two clerks, and yet gains only forty-eight pounds a year! Each of the clerks receives the magnificent salary of 120 roubles (£20) a year, so that the kvartalny has just £8 left for his horses, servants, household and personal expenses; and yet the rascal is so economical, that he contrives to save money out of it, and to retire at the end of a certain period of service with a comfortable provision for his old age. These iniquities excite open and universal indignation; the difficulty is to find an immediate remedy for them. With the pay they receive the officials cannot live. To raise their salaries to adequate amounts would be to increase the expenses of government to a frightful extent, though the public would suffer less by having to pay some additional direct tax than by being despoiled as it is at present, whenever it is brought into contact with the functionaries of the State. But, it is said, the present race of officials are, on the whole, such habitual robbers (I know from my own experience that there are honourable exceptions), that, however much their salaries might be raised, they would still continue their extortions. Nevertheless, it is only by considerably reducing the number of officials, and increasing the pay of those who are retained, that a reform can be rendered possible; though, of course, no system of expedients will have the effect of converting

thieves into honest men. In the meanwhile much good must be effected by the excellent articles on the subject of official corruption that are constantly appearing in the Russian journals, and the very frequency of these articles proves what a large share of attention the abuses in question are receiving. Already mere shame must prevent many of the clerks from receiving bribes too openly ; but no considerable change can be expected during the present generation.

(5.) I now arrive at that great subject, the knout. Of this, however, I have not much to say, having made it a rule to confine my remarks to things which have come under my own observation, or within my immediate knowledge. Many writers speak of the knout as if it were a punishment very ordinarily inflicted, and especially for political offences. It is only inflicted, however, for such crimes as murder and incendiarism, and during the eight months I passed in Moscow and St. Petersburg no one was knouted. "Knout" is simply the Russian for "whip ;" but the barbarous instrument known as *the* knout, and which has been so often described in works on Russia, has now no existence, except as a relic. In some of our prisons, chains, fetters, thumbscrews, and the apparatus of the *peine forte et dure*, are preserved, and thus *the* knout (a whip with an iron ring or hook at the end) may be seen at the Ostrog, or criminal prison of Moscow. This prison I did not visit, though there is no difficulty in obtaining permission to go over it.

I may here mention that I once went through the debtors' prison, which is divided, with an admirable regard for rank, into the nobles' quarter, the merchants' quarter (members of a guild), and citizens' quarter (ordinary traders). A few nobles in dressing-gowns and Circassian caps were lounging about their quarter, smoking papirosses. The citizens I did not see, or if so, there

was nothing noticeable about them. I entered, however, a large hall occupied in common by the merchants, and found everything very comfortable there. Probably these merchants had failed for large amounts, for they seemed contented and cheerful, and the place looked very much like a traktir or tea-house doing a flourishing business. There were apparently many visitors in the room, and nearly every one was smoking and drinking tea. Debtors are detained in this prison until they pay, or until the expiration of five years, when they are liberated and the debt annulled. Every creditor imprisoning a debtor has to pay fifty roubles a year for his maintenance. There are vapour-baths for the use of the prisoners (as also at the Ostrog). There is an amusing distinction, too, between the treatment of nobles and merchants. The latter have to sleep on camp bedsteads, the former are provided with bed and bedding suited to their high descent.

But to return to the knout. I have said that the severest form of corporal punishment was not inflicted on any one while I was living in Moscow, nor (as far as I could ascertain, though I did not inquire very closely into the matter) had any one there been convicted of a capital offence since the crime of Yazikoff, committed under very extraordinary circumstances. Yazikoff was desperately enamoured of a lady, who after consenting to marry him became the wife of another man. In his despair, the betrayed lover retired to a monastery. Some years afterwards the husband of the faithless woman died. She went to the monastery, saw Yazikoff, and assured him of her deep repentance for her treachery; until at last, willing to accept the explanations and excuses of the woman he still loved, he returned to the world, and a second time became her accepted suitor. A second time she deceived him. The unfortunate monk had only left the monastery for his mistress to sacrifice

him once more to a rival. He stabbed her, was tried for the murder, found guilty, and duly sentenced. The ordinary penalty was the knout and exile for life to Siberia; but there is a law which exempts nobles* from corporal punishment. Yazikoff was taken to the prescribed place of execution in the dress of a convict; a sword was broken over his head, as a token that from that time he lost his privileges of nobility; and he was afterwards sent to Siberia. What became of him is uncertain, but it is said that his relations, through one of the escort, conveyed poison to him, and that he destroyed himself before he had proceeded far on the road.

The notion industriously spread by Poles and Jesuits of all nations, that political offenders are punished with the knout, is as false as that they are afterwards sent to work in the mines. After the insurrection of 1825, the five chief conspirators who had committed overt acts, and of whom one shot the veteran Miloradovitch with his own hand, were hanged, and numbers were exiled, their families accompanying them; but the nobility of all who were concerned in this plot would have prevented them from being knouted, not to mention other considerations. The Russian Government has enough to answer for in the way of persecution, without being accused of acts of infamy not committed by it. The same fiction which consigns political offenders to the knout and the mines exaggerates very unnecessarily the sufferings of those who are confined in the fortress. In that silent prison, which faces the Winter Palace, prisoners are confined without trial—even without accusation—and for the most part without hope of liberation. They may be incarcerated there because they know too much, and their indiscretion is feared, or because they have a secret which they are determined to keep. With the spy system there must occasionally be offenders whom it would be inconvenient for the Government to

* Also soldiers who have been honoured with medals.

accuse publicly, and there are reasons connected with politics which might render it desirous to have in safe custody men of influence, who, without having committed any act of treason, are suspected of being suspicious personages. Such men are confined almost without hope of liberation, and without the means of justifying themselves; for often there is nothing to justify—there is no accusation. Several persons, however, who had been consigned to the fortress by Nicholas, were liberated on the accession of the present Emperor. I know of two such instances. One of the persons set free had been imprisoned for nearly thirty years, and could scarcely be regarded as a victim of tyranny, inasmuch as he had committed a political offence which would be considered of the gravest kind in any country; the other, with whom I was personally acquainted, had passed a shorter period in the fortress, and had been placed there without accusation, though he knew the motive which had dictated his arrest. He informed me that, putting on one side that supreme evil, the loss of liberty, he had nothing to complain of as regarded his general treatment. He had his own servant, the governor of the fortress visited him every day in his room (not a dungeon below the level of the Neva), he read whatever books or journals he chose to order, and wrote as often as he pleased to his friends; but was not allowed to receive their letters in return. All information which his friends wished him to receive had to be sent in the first instance to the Governor, who then communicated it to his prisoner. This gentleman told me that he had read de Custine's book in the fortress; that he received various foreign journals; and, in short, that, forbidden or not, he could always obtain whatever publications he wished to have. It must not be inferred from this that the Russian Government supplies its political prisoners, as a matter of course, with all the latest revolutionary and anti-Russian works. In the case I am speaking of, the forbidden books and journals

were perhaps obtained through favour; I was assured that they were received, and that "there was a way of getting such things:" but of course could not inquire as to the means. The other prisoner, of whom I had only an indirect knowledge, also received without distinction whatever books and journals he chose to ask for; he obtained them, however, from his friends, who not only wrote to him but visited him. Of course no amount of civility or kindness on the part of the gaolers can render a prison a tolerable residence; but it is only fair that I should give such accounts of the internal discipline of the place as have been communicated to me—in one case directly, in the other not very indirectly—by those who had been themselves state prisoners, and who had suffered too much from their confinement to have any disposition to palliate its evils.

There is a very general impression, too, that most of the Siberian prisoners have been exiled for offences against the State, whereas the immense majority of them are ordinary criminals. Nevertheless, numbers of Russian families, and for the most part the best families in the country, were banished to Siberia after the revolt of 1825, and a still larger number of Poles after the Polish insurrection of 1831. Several travellers, German and English, have during the last few years thrown some light on the condition of the Russian political prisoners in Siberia, and Hansteen, Erman, and Hill, agree in representing it as infinitely better than what it had generally been imagined to be. Mr. Hill found that there were no political prisoners working in the mines—the very same thing having been said some years before by the "Quarterly Review" in an article exposing the monstrous misrepresentations of de Custine. M. Hansteen found many of the conspirators of 1825 occupying government offices, and in some cases intrusted with important functions. Perhaps, however, the worst that can be urged against the system of exile to

Siberia, is what has been said in favour of Siberian society. Right or wrong, the conspirators against the Russian Government have been for the most part men of high culture, and I can readily believe what Russians who have returned from the most important of the Siberian towns agree in saying—that it is impossible to find more agreeable and more intellectual society in any part of the empire. "All our best men are there," I have heard it said. This is not precisely the case, but if it be true even to a great extent, how miserably unsound must that system be which, under pretence of preserving the country, sacrifices a portion of its best blood! It is like the old phlebotomical practice, which cured a strong man of fever at the risk of weakening him terribly, and killed a feeble one outright. However, the present Emperor has amnestied all the political exiles; and those Russians or Poles of this class who are still in Siberia are there of their own free will. Some have estates there, others have taken service, and there must be others again who, having spent the best part of their lives in exile, have lost heart, and would rather die where they are than return to their native land. "It is too late," said some Polish exiles who were recalled by Alexander I.; "we have already prepared for a longer journey."

In the meanwhile there is a constant flow of criminals to Siberia, some of whom are condemned to transportation for life, or for a certain number of years, with hard labour in the mines; others, whose offences are less grave, being exiled to the penitentiary settlements, or to the agricultural colonies; while others again, who have not broken the criminal law, but who have committed "offences against morality," are sent to reside in some particular town or district assigned to them by the Government, where they remain under the surveillance of the police until their term of banishment has expired. Another class of exiles cannot, strictly speaking, be said to have been condemned at all; for they are not accused of any

breach of the law, but are transported to Siberia with the permission, and under the direction of Government, because, as serfs, they have offended, perhaps injured, at all events dissatisfied, their proprietors. How far this right is abused I cannot say, but that it admits of the most shameful abuse is very evident. It is bad enough that the owner of an estate should have the right to choose which of his serfs he shall send to the army (though it is but fair to add, that on most estates this right is not exercised, the proprietors leaving them to decide for themselves by lottery or election); but that a landlord should have the power of arbitrarily banishing any one of his peasants who happens to have displeased him, is a monstrous iniquity. The serfs on whom it is designed that this punishment of exile should fall are deserters from the estate, incurable vagabonds, hopeless drunkards, eternal brawlers, and "good-for-nothings" generally. But all that is necessary to insure the peasant's transportation is the representation of the proprietor that he is a worthless character, together with the payment of his travelling expenses (twenty-five roubles—a trifle over four pounds), and the supply of a sufficient outfit, which must include a sheepskin pelisse, a caftan, three pairs of trousers, three shirts, two pairs of boots, a fur cap, and a pair of worsted gloves. The wife has a right to accompany her husband with all her family, if the children are not grown up; so that the proprietor, besides the travelling expenses, loses the services certainly of one, and perhaps of several peasants. This, however, does not interfere with the fact, that transportation for life is a severe punishment for vagabondage. The peasant, too, may have committed no offence at all. If the proprietor be a capricious tyrant or a sensualist (many proprietors are both), it is easy to imagine how, not the worst, but the best, peasant on the estate may incur his disfavour; and it is vain to pretend that an affair of a hundred pounds would stand between a rich slave-owner, accustomed to gratify every whim, and his

vengeance. On the other hand, it must be difficult to know what to do with an idle, dissolute, and dangerous serf, who has not in any serious manner broken the law, but who is known to have bad habits and disreputable associates, and is perhaps even suspected of some grave offence, which cannot be distinctly proved against him. Such a man in another country would be discharged without a character; in Russia, a serf cannot be set loose in this way: either he must be sent to the army, where, after or before the ordinary levy, he will always be received, on condition of the proprietor paying for his uniform and equipments, provided he has not passed a certain age; or, if he is too old for the army, or otherwise unsuited to the military service, he must be sent to Siberia. There he has a portion of land allotted to him in the agricultural colonies, which he cultivates on the same conditions as the crown peasants in other parts of the empire, and in a material sense he may be happy enough. For Siberia is not one vast region of eternal snow; it has a South as well as a North, and in some parts the climate is admirable.

The exiles to Siberia start from Moscow in caravans, guarded by an escort of soldiers, which is relieved at each station. The criminals have one side of their head and face shaved, and are kept apart from the exiled peasants; those who have committed grave crimes are also separated from those who have been convicted of minor offences. Assassins and other dangerous convicts are chained two and two together, but the weight of their chains must not exceed five pounds. In addition to the escort of soldiers there is a vanguard and rearguard of mounted Cossacks, rendered necessary by the numerous escapes that were formerly effected by prisoners into the woods, where they afterwards maintained themselves by means of highway robberies. The exiles walk twenty versts (13⅓ miles) a day, for two days out of three, and

rest on the third. They also halt when the roads are bad, or when there is a snow-storm. The frequent assertion, hazarded by so many writers on Russia, that a large number of exiles to Siberia die miserably before reaching their destination, is incorrect, and is founded on a misapprehension of the object had in view by the Government in transporting them. Doubtless the punishment inflicted on criminals is sufficiently severe to deter others from crime, and is intended to be so; but some persons seem to think that the Russian Government cruelly sends prisoners to Siberia because the climate of Siberia is in most parts exceedingly cold, and because it is a very long way from St. Petersburg and Moscow. There is, however, a special and sufficient reason for sending them to Siberia in preference to any other portion of the empire. The Government wishes to colonize it, to develope its immense resources, and to people with Russians the vast territory which lies between Russia proper and China, and which a century since was without roads, without adequate protection for settlers—in short, without the commonest elements of civilization. Nominally the country belonged to Russia, but by far the greater part of it was in the hands of savage tribes. Numbers of these tribes have been converted to Christianity by the Russian missionaries, and nearly all are kept in order by the Russian Government. But, though brigandage has to a great extent been put an end to in Siberia, and colonization rendered possible, the country is greatly in want of settlers, and the Government would not willingly lose one man who is exiled thither: for this reason, and also, as every unprejudiced person has a right to suppose, with a more humane motive, there are medical officers attached to the various stations on the route, and the governor of every province through which the exiles pass has to inspect them, to draw up a report as to their sanitary condition, and to hear any complaints or statements

of importance that they may have to make. Those who are in bad health do not continue their journey until they are quite recovered.

Every caravan includes a certain number of vehicles for the baggage, for those who may fall ill on the road, and for the wives and children of the prisoners. Political prisoners (*vide* Voinaroffsky or any other Russian poem on the subject) are sent to Siberia in *kibitkas*, the *kibitka* being a carriage with a hood. When it became the turn of old Souvaroff, the only general who ever gained the highest glory for the Russian arms, and inspired Russian troops with true enthusiasm—when it became his turn to go into exile, the veteran commander found the traditional *kibitka* waiting at his door to convey him from Moscow to his estates in the country. He declined the luxury. "If Souvaroff," he said, "is to be sent away in disgrace, the commonest cart is quite good enough to take him into exile." And the commander who had been named Ryminisky for his great victory over the Turks, and Italiisky ("Italianus") for his Italian campaign, was driven off in a *telega*.

A certain number of malefactors, instead of being sent to Siberia, are employed at public works in the capitals and the large provincial towns, and are employed in the making and repairing of roads, the construction of docks, &c. I have seen them at work in Moscow surrounded by soldiers. A few, who had been convicted of grave offences, had chains on their feet; they were all warmly clad in the grey prison dress and the ordinary sheepskin pelisse. They did not seem over-worked, and had a sufficient time allowed them in the middle of the day—from twelve till two—for their meals.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FROM CRONSTADT TO MOSCOW.

My travelling in Russia, though not very extensive, was in some respects interesting. I journeyed from St. Petersburg to Moscow by rail; from Moscow to the Troitza monastery in a *povozka*—one of the numerous kinds of sledge-carriages; and in returning to England, from St. Petersburg to Taurogen on the Prussian frontier, in a diligence—also a sledge. I went to Russia from Flensburg in a steamer, and perhaps ought to say something about the approach to St. Petersburg, which, however, has already been described by a great many tourists. I myself have but a tourist's acquaintance with St. Petersburg, where I lived altogether only four weeks. When I first saw the Neva it was liquid, and the granite quays were hot with the summer's sun. At the end of March I left the river a mass of ice, and the sun was not at all scorching, even at noon. On the contrary, the weather was cold, with that damp, dispiriting coldness that precedes the general thaw; and St. Petersburg, with the exception of the crowded Nevsky Prospect and the promenade on the quay, seemed to me a wretched city —in the words of Poushkin, "all dulness, cold, and granite." "A magnificent city, a miserable city," says the same poet. It appears to me (which, however, is not exactly Poushkin's meaning), that St. Petersburg is magnificent in the summer and miserable in the winter; though winter is the fashionable season, and during the hot, nightless summer the capital is deserted by all who have country-houses and are not detained in town by the state service. One thing is undeniable, that the first sight the traveller gets of St. Petersburg is more imposing and

infinitely more beautiful in summer than in winter. In the latter season he approaches it after a tedious, snowy, five days' journey through the Baltic provinces; in the former he sails towards it on the waters of one of the most beautiful rivers in Europe, and certainly by far the most beautiful of those on which the great capitals are built. Like a great many other fair things, the Neva is not so useful as it is ornamental; for it is too shallow for the navigation of large vessels, and it has, moreover, the disadvantage of being solid during half the year. Occasionally, too, it inundates the metropolis; and in every street water-marks are to be seen, showing the height to which the waves rose during the terrible flood of 1825—which a believer in symbols might regard as correlative with the lamentable insurrection of Pestel that same year. Numbers of the insurgents were sent to Siberia. The waves could not be exiled, but they were imprisoned between two long lines of granite ramparts, which form the most magnificent quays in the world. It is beyond the quays, however, where the Neva disports itself freely, that the beautiful river is seen in all its beauty. Its soft green banks, which it continually overflows, come down to the very edge of the water; and the water everywhere, even in the heart of the capital, is as clear and transparent as the Seine at Asnières, or the Thames at Twickenham.

The Neva at St. Petersburg is in some parts not unlike the Seine at Paris. Let the Winter Palace, the Hermitage, and the other Imperial mansions in the same line, stand for the Tuileries and the Louvre; the Government buildings on the other side for the Institute, the houses on the Quai d'Orsay, the Palace of the Legion of Honour, &c., and the resemblance will be at once perceived by all who are familiar with the two cities. The Neva, however, is twice as broad as the Seine, and the St. Petersburg quays are, in all respects, superior to those of Paris.

The golden cupola of a church—strange object in the

North—is the first thing that meets the traveller's eye as he approaches Cronstadt from the Gulf of Finland. Going from Cronstadt up the Neva to St. Petersburg, the first indications he sees of the capital are a long golden spire, like a needle—or, when the sun is shining on it, like the flight of a distant rocket—and a large golden dome, like a balloon. The needle-like spire adorns the Admiralty, the ball of gold is the centre cupola of St. Isaac's Cathedral. For at least half an hour the steeple and the dome are all that can be seen of St. Petersburg. They seem to belong to nothing, and to be floating in the air. And if the appearance of St. Isaac's is marvellous at a distance, it is certainly magnificent to a spectator at a few hundred yards. The exterior is quite worthy of the splendid and elaborate ornamentation of the inside. The immense central dome is surrounded by four small ones on the same model, which form a square. Seen from the other side of the river, when the slanting rays of the evening sun fall upon them, these five golden cupolas assume the most fantastic colours, and are in turns gold, bronze, green, and fire-coloured, like the back of a beetle; while the gold-lettered inscription on the façade glows like pure light.

In sailing up the Neva, almost every building one sees is of present or historical interest. There is the statue of Peter, for instance, which tells a different story to each beholder. According to Mickievicez, it is "an avalanche of despotism," that will some day come rolling to the ground. Le Maistre, the enthusiast for order, and who, writing immediately after the French Revolution, respects Russia as the great conservative Power, is in love with the Neva, but says of the statue, that "Peter is lifting his arm above the city with a gesture which we know not whether to regard as one of menace or protection." Others, of a more prosaic turn of mind, content themselves with telling how the immense block of granite on which the statue stands was hewn out of the Finland

quarries, rolled towards the Neva, and borne down the river to St. Petersburg, on a raft constructed specially for its reception. Or they will relate the anecdote of the Russian officer who used to gallop his horse to the very edge of a cliff, and suddenly haul him up when his head and neck were already hanging over the precipice; and will explain how the sculptor Falconnet, to whom the feat of the said officer is supposed to have suggested the attitude of the equestrian figure (but who, in fact, copied it from the antique), poured so many tons of molten metal into the legs and haunches of the animal, in order to maintain it in its present erect position. Others tell the story of the foreigner who, having lost his way, got on to the isvoshchik's horse, and put himself into the attitude of Peter; upon which the intelligent driver at once understood that he was to convey the gentleman to the neighbourhood of the bronze man on horseback. Indeed, this statue says something to every one, and every one has something to say about the statue. Let me endeavour to translate the fine lines with which it has inspired Mr. Ogareff, who assists Mr. Herzen in editing the *Kolokol*, or "Bell," which is published in Paternoster Row, and circulated secretly all over Russia. He is walking on a wintry autumnal night along the quays of the Neva:—

"The night was advancing, the wave was rising, and flocks of ice passed by with crackling sound. Covered with grey foam, and shining with leaden brilliancy, the river looked frightful, and struck upon the granite of the quays with splashing. In the mist a dark row of houses looked sadly from the shore. . . . The streets and the palaces are silent. Alone, motionless on a horse, a gigantic rider is seen.

"His head proudly erect, and his figure haughtily extended, he points somewhere in the distance with his hand—points the giant from his mighty horse. And the horse, held lightly back by the bridle, is rearing

on his hind legs, that the rider may see further into the distance.

"Whither does that hand point, and wherefore through the darkness does the horseman strain his eyes? With what thought is he inspired? Surely he knows not thought in the middle of the night? Of what is he proud? Why is he borne forward, as it were, in spite of the resistance of his horse? He has fearlessly leaped on the granite rock, and there fearlessly he stands.

"He stands there, because he is the builder of his own glorious city. With the dawn of day the ships will come. He points to the distance with his powerful hand, for with them they will bring Europe's mind to our forest-grown land, and the light will penetrate into our woods. He is proud, because he is great.

"I prayed in the late hour, and a thrill passed through my frame. And I was proud myself, as though I had had a share in the work through which he is so great. Proudly, but not boldly, I bent my knee before him, and I felt I was a Russian.

"Then, lifting up my head, I gazed into his face, and there was a kind of sadness in it. He looked sorrowfully at me, and still pointed with his finger into the distance. What sorrow oppressed him? Whither did he point from his horse? What did he want from me?

"And, in spite of myself, I was confused. Sadly, and with timid steps, I went away from him; but for a long time he was still before my eyes. I was separated from him by the walls of the Admiralty; but he still followed me, and how gloomy was his look!"

Ascending the river, we come to the Fortress of Peter and Paul, which stands opposite to the magnificent Winter Palace, on the other bank of the river. The relative position of the Imperial mansion and of the Imperial dungeons has struck many writers, who thereupon remember that "it was not far from the Capitol to the

Tarpeian rock." Some, again, see in the fortress the last resting-place of the Tzars (since the time of Peter), and reflect that, in the midst of their power and prosperity, the Russian emperors cannot look from the windows of their palace without beholding their tomb. The French king avoided St. Germain, because from its terrace the spire of the funereal St. Denis is visible; but no such weakness belongs to the sovereigns of Russia. *Their* St. Denis stares them in the face, and side by side with the church where they hope to repose in peace are the dungeons in which lie those whom some call traitors and others patriots.

Not only is this approach from Cronstadt to St. Petersburg, and the passage along the quays full of interest, but nearly everything that is beautiful or interesting in St. Petersburg is found on the banks of the Neva. For instance, the Isaac Cathedral, the Winter Palace, the Taurida Palace, the Palace of Marble, the Hermitage, the Exchange, the Admiralty, the Fortress, the Summer Gardens, with the admirable statue of Kryloff the fabulist in his dressing-gown, the Review Ground, &c. After the quays, the most interesting part of St. Petersburg is the celebrated Nevsky Prospect, along which we pass to reach the terminus of the Moscow railway. This railway is the only one in Russia that is completed, except the short one from St. Petersburg to Tsarsky Selo ("village of the Tzar"), and the line from St. Petersburgh to Wilna, on the Russian frontier, which, however, is not yet open for general traffic.

When I travelled from St. Petersburg to Moscow immense preparations were being made for the coronation of Alexander the Second. The new capital was gradually emptying itself into the old, and instead of one train, as many as two were despatched daily along the line.

The Moscow houses had all been repainted, and the Moscow beggars, that they might not annoy the visitors, had, with infinite consideration (for the visitors), been

imprisoned. At the same time the cost of everything, necessaries as well as luxuries, had risen to such an alarming extent that the Government, in the interest of the working classes, felt called upon to fix the maximum price of beef at threepence a pound. (I need scarcely tell the reader which were the favourite meats with the proprietors of *tables d'hôte* as long as this curious alimentary edict remained in force.) Even the officials in the passport office and in the office of printed books were considerate, and neither delayed the traveller nor confiscated his literary luggage. Those who arrived in St. Petersburg one day could start the day afterwards for Moscow.

The most remarkable thing at the railway station was the fact that, though according to law every one who wishes to travel from St. Petersburg to Moscow must show his passport when he purchases his ticket, more than one person who had forgotten or had not had time to get his "papers" put in order, obtained his ticket by simply paying the ordinary price and exhibiting a rouble or half a rouble in addition. Indeed, the amount of cheating and corruption practised in connection with the Moscow and St. Petersburg railway is ludicrous or appalling, according to the disposition of the person who witnesses it. I confess that it amused me, at least a great deal of it did, though it is impossible to think of it seriously without disgust, and without some misgiving as to whether the Russians as a mass will ever regard office as anything but an opportunity for extorting money. For it must not be imagined that the officials of the railway suffer in the least when they are not paid the lawful government fare—which often happens. Sometimes an *employé*, civil or military, wearing the government uniform, will refuse to give any money, on the pretext that he is travelling on state service, or even without any pretext at all. At others, a person who has not taken a ticket will give the conductor a rouble or so for the

privilege of travelling without one; or with a third-class ticket he will travel in the first class. Another plan, which not myself alone, but several persons resident in Russia, natives as well as foreigners, had observed, consisted in taking a ticket at the last station and giving it up at the terminus—a permission to travel twenty miles, instead of a permission to travel four hundred and eighty! Of course the conductor of the train finds his account in all these swindles, which take place beneath his eyes, if he is not a direct and active participator in them. It is commonly reported that the conductors of the Moscow railway earn very fair incomes, though the pay they receive from the Government is, as usual, quite inadequate; and one, we were informed, after a career of only five or six years, was able to resign his functions, and to lead a life of independent idleness. Naturally the Moscow railway is not a paying speculation; but who cares?—it is government property! The State found some time since that it had been shamefully deceived in various particulars by the American contractors, who engage to supply the engines and keep the rails in order; and it is openly cheated by its own servants. Sometimes an officer is sent by the Emperor on a special mission from St. Petersburg to Moscow, to observe the conduct of the functionaries on the line. Occasionally one man is fined and dismissed, another imprisoned, but the same system of roguery recommences the next day; and the only remedy is that recommended by Kokoreff, the merchant, in his interesting pamphlet on Russian commerce, viz., that such things should be managed by private companies. Indeed, it cannot be supposed that the associations which have set going the railways now in progress in all parts of Russia, will manage their affairs in so lax a manner as not to know how many passengers travel by their line from one end to the other, and how much they pay.

Materially speaking, there is nothing to be said against

the Moscow railway. The stations, the engine-houses, which with their large Eastern domes look like mosques, the refreshment-rooms along the line, are all commodious, well-constructed buildings. The carriages are constructed on the American plan. Those of the first class are elegant little drawing-rooms, furnished with chairs, tables, sofas, &c. To these, however, the traveller by the first class is not admitted as a matter of course; they are usually taken by families, or parties of friends. It is the second and third-class carriages, I believe, that are especially American in their construction. A second-class carriage on the Moscow line is a long saloon, fitted up with "boxes," like a London coffee-room. Down the centre is a passage, and on each side are seven of the said "boxes," each "box" being made for the accommodation of four persons. Thus the carriage has altogether fifty-six souls. At each end is a little platform, which serves as an observatory or station for the guard, and for those who wish to enjoy the exterior air or to smoke. It is usual to purchase these luxuries with a little bribe of about fourpence—smoking and standing on the platform being strictly forbidden by the railway regulations.

I must, however, do the railway administration the justice to say that it is most liberal in allowing travellers to smoke whenever the train stops, and they feel inclined to get out of the carriages. Three or four years ago, when smoking was not permitted in the streets of St. Petersburg (the liberty to smoke has since been conceded by Alexander II.), it was curious, after passing through the narrow thoroughfares of the capital and not meeting with a vestige of tobacco, to find at the first station on the railway—the last place where we should expect to find them in England—a multitude of smokers; in fact, the whole body of travellers, women as well as men, inhaling and exhaling the fumes of the fragant *papirosses*. These *papirosses* are, of course, of various qualities, but the best of those manufactured by celebrated dealers like Müller

and Joukoff, are made of the very finest tobacco—far finer than any that can be procured in London, unless it happens to have been imported ready prepared from the East. The best Russian tobacco is naturally grown in the southern provinces, where the climate is equal to that of Turkey; and it appears, from official statistics, that, of the large quantity imported into Russia, about half comes from the West and half from the East. Apparently, it is with this latter Eastern produce that the Russians make their *papirosses*. Asiatic tobacco is also introduced into England; but to avoid the duty of nine and sixpence a pound, which would be charged on it if it were "manufactured," it is brought over in the leaf, and has to be moistened and treated in various objectionable ways, until at last, when it is ready for smoking, it has lost nearly all its aroma. The introduction of the Russian *cigarette* into England is one of the unexpected results of the Crimean war, and considering that the bundles labelled "Maryland doux" are sold in London at half-a-crown each, when in St. Petersburg and Moscow they only cost tenpence, it may be said that the *papirosses* have already gained a large amount of public favour. At all events, there is no tobacconist in a fair way of business who does not sell them. This invasion of the *cigarette* is rather a curious phenomenon, and it is a more important one than would at first appear. In Russia not one person in a hundred smokes anything but *cigarettes*. They are smoked in Turkey, in the islands of the Mediterranean, in Spain, to a small extent in England, and to a much greater extent in France. From St. Petersburg and from Constantinople, from the North and from the South, the taste is spreading all through Europe. Now the important point connected with the habit is this—that without exception, wherever the *cigarette* has been introduced, women have become smokers. They cannot tolerate the strong pungent smoke of the pipe, or even of cigars. As long as men smoke cigars and pipes, they must smoke by

themselves. But the delicate odour of a really fine *cigarette* is agreeable to most women, while, so far from the fumes being irritating in a physical sense they are decidedly soothing; and we know that a physician of great eminence has actually recommended the smoking of *papirosses* (with inhalation) to ladies suffering from asthma! The *cigarette* appears to have been adopted as a compromise between cigar-smoking, which to a certain extent excludes those who practise it from ladies' society, and no smoking at all, which is not pleasant. As soon, however, as ladies habitually tolerate smoking in their presence, it will be simply because they find it agreeable, and they will then be not very far from trying it themselves. I should not consider this a great calamity, but many persons would. All I wish is, to point out the fact that *cigarette*-smoking is gaining ground in England, and that in every country where it has become general ladies smoke.

In the meanwhile the passengers have thrown the ends of their *papirosses* away, and re-entered the train, which, in direct contradiction of orders, goes off at the rate of twenty-four or twenty-five miles an hour, instead of only twenty. But everything on this railway is done in spite of positive directions to the contrary, and it would indeed be rather difficult to perform a journey estimated at 480 miles in 22 hours—the one general order to which the officials *must* attend—to stop several minutes at twenty different stations, to pull up in one place for breakfast, at another for dinner, and so on, and at the same time never to exceed the by-no-means-formidable pace of twenty miles (thirty versts) an hour. There are also halts for the purpose of trying the wheels, which in the winter, as a matter of course, are tapped at every station—a very necessary precaution when it is considered how brittle severe frost will sometimes render even the densest iron.

Since I travelled on the Moscow railway the duration of the entire journey has been shortened to twenty hours (the Emperor has done it in ten), but I must add that

it has been also discovered that the line is *not* 480 miles long by about 30 miles. The explanation of the error is very simple. The American company who made the line, and who undertook to keep it in order, were in each instance to be paid by the mile, and the estimate of the length of railway was their own. I have said that the journey between St. Petersburg and Moscow at present occupies only twenty hours; but, owing to the difference of time between the two capitals, the journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow seems to take an hour more than that from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Leaving Moscow at twelve at noon, you reach St. Petersburg at half-past seven in the morning; starting from St. Petersburg at the same hour, you do not get to Moscow until half-past eight.

The regulations respecting tickets are good enough if they were only attended to—which, as we have seen, they are not. Supposing that the passenger is leaving St. Petersburg for Moscow, he receives a ticket which is a programme of the whole journey. The name of each station is printed on it, in the order in which it stands on the line, with the fares from each to the Moscow terminus. Travellers between intermediate stations have similar tickets, and there would be no possibility of their avoiding the just payment of their fares if the conductor would make every one show his pass on entering the train. As it is, people with third-class tickets often travel in second and first-class carriages, while others merely take tickets from St. Petersburg to the first station, and afterwards from the last station to Moscow. I was not aware of these practices until after I had reached Moscow; but on returning from Moscow to St. Petersburg, I certainly saw a rush of from twenty to thirty persons from the train to the ticket-office of the last station before the terminus—a station which was of no importance, and from which I do not think there was one *bonâ fide* traveller. Some officers in the same train (in what branch of the military service, or whether commissioned or non-commissioned, I

cannot say—but they were in uniform) declined, good-humouredly but positively, to burden themselves with tickets at all. They gave the conductor some papirosses, but nothing else.

As it is possible some of my readers, unskilled in the noble art of bribery, may want to know the exact amounts of the fares between St. Petersburg and Moscow, I will here publish them: First-class, 19 roubles; first-class saloon for sixteen persons, 200 roubles; second-class, 13 roubles; third-class, 7 roubles. A luggage-train, which stops at each of the twenty stations to deliver and receive goods, takes second and third-class passengers at 6 roubles and 4 roubles.

The ordinary third-class carriages are better than the second-class carriages on our lines, and the second-class carriages are better than the carriages of the same class on the French and German railways. Nothing can be more miserable than to travel, in winter or early spring, in a second-class carriage on one of the East-German lines; for though the cold is very severe, it is apparently not enough so to make the directors think it worth while to protect their passengers from it. In the long Russian saloons there are only two doors, one at each end, with outer doors beyond them; and there are double windows, which render draughts impossible. Persons who can never be contented with any plan may object, that if the windows are hermetically closed the air of the saloon must be impure. But it is seldom full. By an amicable arrangement with some of the people near you, you can generally get an entire bench to lie on, at all events during a portion of the journey; and with this view the Russians always take pillows with them, as they also invariably do when travelling in *kibitkas* or *tarantasses* on the high road.

The cost of refreshments at the various stations is moderate, if you take what the Russians take themselves. You can get excellent tea, with as much cream as you like,

for fourpence a tumbler; and biscuits and cakes for what they cost in most other countries. Slices of caviar, cheese, and the awful *butter-brod* of the Germans, are also sold; and fair ordinary Bordeaux costs only a rouble or a rouble and a half a bottle. Dinner, consisting of soup, some more or less national *entrée*, roast meat and salad, one rouble. Breakfast (different kinds of meat, &c.), thirty copeiks—about a shilling. Guinness's stout and Bass's ale are found at the chief stations, but you are charged a rouble the quart bottle for these luxuries. The great article of consumption, however, all along the line, is tea.

It is impossible to travel with greater security than on this Moscow railway. As there is only one passenger-train a day, and a luggage-train twice or three times a week, there is not much danger of a collision. Then there are no tunnels, and no cuttings or embankments sufficiently important to deserve the name. A French lady, who had lived all her life in Russia, and who travelled in the same diligence with me from St. Petersburg to the Prussian frontier, exclaimed, when she saw near Tilsit a hill-side about fifty feet high, "I have at last seen a mountain!"—and so in a comparative sense she had, for round St. Petersburg, and between St. Petersburg and Moscow, there are not even hillocks. At Valdai, celebrated for its bells, not very far from Moscow, the Russians pretend that there is a chain of hills,* but they are not perceptible to the naked eye, though, doubtless, an engineer would discover them. An English engineer, who travelled with me on the Moscow line, was quite charmed with the capabilities of the country for railway construction, in a political as well as in a scientific sense. "No tunnels, no viaducts, no cuttings, no embankments—and

* I might say mountains, for in Russia hills and mountains are designated, curiously and suggestively enough, by the same word—"gore."

above all, no Act of Parliament!" he exclaimed. Many of the new lines present similar advantages. There is no land to buy, no import duties to pay, and engineers say that the £16,500 a mile, at which the contracts have been taken, will leave a very fine margin for profit.

Among the numerous railways projected in Russia, it is scarcely known in England that one is already being planned from Nijni-Novgorod (which in a few years will be connected by rail with Moscow) to the river Amoor. An American company has offered to construct it at its own expense in return for certain privileges, one of these being the cession of a certain amount of land on each side of the line, on which it is proposed to erect trade stations. The line would be upwards of seven thousand miles long, and the journey would be performed in about a fortnight. At present the caravans are thirteen weeks going from Moscow to Kiakhta, on the Chinese frontier.* The construction of this railway to the Amoor presents serious difficulties, of which the most important would be the brittleness of the iron in the Siberian cold, and the probability that at the commencement of winter the first frost would, in marshy places, cause the rails to spring from their sleepers. This inconvenience has been already felt on the Moscow line, where some of the land was so boggy that in certain spots small forests of logs had to be sunk before the rails could be laid down with any chance of their remaining level. After the wet season, when the water in these bogs expands into ice, the rails are sometimes forced up; and though I believe no accident has yet occurred from that cause on the Moscow line, it is not certain that passengers would be equally fortunate in travelling through the deserts of Siberia, where the number of signal-men engaged would, com-

* It will be remembered, however, that news sent by a *Government courier* from Pekin on the 9th of last November was received in St. Petersburg on the 15th December.

paratively speaking, be of course very small. On the St. Petersburg and Moscow railway there is a signal-man at every verst (two thirds of a mile).

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO THE PRUSSIAN FRONTIER.

As I approached Moscow from St. Petersburg in the summer, I found a sensible and progressive increase of temperature, and when at the end of winter, in March, I travelled to St. Petersburg from Moscow, I left a hard frost and clear sunlit atmosphere for a half thaw, a mist, and a perpetual drizzle of sleet and snow. It has often been said that Moscow is more thoroughly Russian than St. Petersburg, and, independently of atmospheric differences, there are many points in which the old and the new capital are unlike one another. In several respects St. Petersburg resembles Berlin far more than Moscow; only it is Berlin on a larger scale, and with a magnificent river flowing through it. There are also a good many more palaces, and grander ones, in the Russian city, to say nothing of its unrivalled quays. But one of the first things that strike the traveller in the capital of the north is the rigid, military aspect of the streets, with all the houses drawn up in line, or in columns of companies, or —seen from an eminence—in squares of battalions; and this is just what every one notices in Berlin. In addition, moreover, to the architectural resemblance between Berlin and St. Petersburg, the latter derives a certain Teutonic look from the large number of Germans included in its official and mercantile population, which is increased by

the presence of an inevitable proportion of Germans in distress; whereas in Moscow, when you "take your walks abroad," the only poor you see are pilgrim-like beggars in caftan and girdle, with the traditional staff, with shoes of bark and with beards a foot long. In St. Petersburg the ordinary winter costume (except among the *moujiks*) is very much like that of Berlin, and nearly all the men wear hats; in Moscow, a general wearing of hats is a phenomenon which only manifests itself simultaneously with a display of full-dress uniforms, and may be accepted as a sign of a *fête*-day requiring visits to be paid.

I have already spoken more than once of the architecture of Moscow. St. Petersburg is built on a plain which was once a marsh; Moscow stands on hills. There is nothing characteristically Russian in the fact of a city being erected on uneven ground; but in all the old Russian towns of importance there is a stronghold, or "kremlin," built on a commanding point, and this cannot be said to be replaced in St. Petersburg by the fortress. Then, in St. Petersburg, numbers of the principal churches and cathedrals are not constructed on the old Russo-Byzantine model, but exhibit a compromise between the native or naturalized style and that of Italy since the Renaissance. Of the small square churches with gilt, painted, or spangled domes—one principal dome in the centre, with a satellite at each of the four corners—there are but few specimens in the new capital. In Moscow, again, every family in good circumstances has a separate house, which is almost always detached, and surrounded by a garden; whereas, in St. Petersburg, those who do not live in palaces generally content themselves with a "flat," in the French style. In both cities the old Russian custom still prevails of calling houses after the names of their proprietors (so that on your letters you are addressed in the Oriental style, as "So-and-so, at the

house of So-and-so"), but the numbering system is being gradually introduced into St. Petersburg. Finally, the two capitals present a striking contrast in the matter of colour. St. Petersburg is composed of long regular lines of grey; the fantastic Moscow is white or pale yellow, with roofs of dark red or light green, varied with cupolas of gold or of bright ultramarine with golden stars.

Magnificent as St. Petersburg had appeared to me when I first saw it, it certainly disappointed me the second time, when I arrived there from Moscow. However, there was the Italian Opera to see, which was not open when I passed through St. Petersburg in the summer of the previous year, and which is a magnificent house, second only in my recollection to the unrivalled Moscow Opera (constructed by the same architect, M. Cavos), and, perhaps, also (putting size and commodiousness out of the comparison) to the artistically-decorated Opera of Berlin. I of course made a series of visits to the Gallery of the Hermitage, which possesses Brouloff's admirable "Destruction of Pompeii," and a few other works of merit by Russian artists, together with a marvellous collection of Italian, Flemish, and Dutch paintings —of which the Titians and Rembrandts are especially remarkable, both for their number and for their rare excellence. Here, too, is the wonderful comic series of pictures by Paul Potter (in a style with which, of late years, the name of Granville has been especially associated), the "Animals sitting in Judgment on Man." Without attempting to give an account of the treasures of the Hermitage Gallery, I may call attention to two seemingly-unimportant restorations that have been made during the present reign, but which have their significance as testifying to the liberal-mindedness of Alexander II. Houdon's fine marble bust of Voltaire, of which the bust at the Théâtre Français is a repetition, had been consigned by Nicholas, the great *anti-"idéologue"* (who must have had

peculiar horror of the all-examining author of the "Philosophical Dictionary"), to some lumber-room in the palace; and, from the same motives of propriety which induce the Ministers of Fine Art to discountenance the utter nudity of Academy models, Rembrandt's "Danaë," remarkable for the forcible drawing of the principal figure, and for the voluptuousness expressed in her attitude and in her rather common order of face, had been removed from the public gaze, and could not be seen unless the visitor went through the tedious form of procuring a special permission to view it. I am sure that no person of education—except, perhaps, the ex-editor of the *Univers*, who regards some of the greatest pictures ever painted as diabolical devices, because, by his own account, he is unable to look at the Correggio in the square room of the Louvre without "feeling like a satyr,"—would object to Rembrandt's "Danaë" occupying its present position on the walls of the Hermitage. But it was consistent, on the part of the sovereign who persecuted the Moscow University, and increased the rigour of the censorship, to imagine that the youth of his empire could be corrupted by the sight of a fine picture.

The Imperial library, with its admirably-arranged catalogue (on the plan of Adelung), is another of the things that must be seen at St. Petersburg. In one of the rooms, enclosed in glass cases, are a variety of manuscript curiosities, the most remarkable of which is the astonishing apophthegm given to Louis XIV. as a boy to write "copies" from—"*Les rois font ce qui leur plait;*" a notion which he certainly carried out to the best of his ability in after-life. "*J'attends le moman de revoire mes chairs soldats*" is another specimen of royal orthography. Besides many volumes of manuscript by Voltaire, which have never been published, the Hermitage contains the whole of his private library. It was after a careful examination of it that M. de Maistre wrote his remarks

concerning Voltaire's characteristic indifference to truth as shown in the numerous incorrect editions of important works studied by him, and annotated in his own hand.

Some of the Imperial manufactories, the School of Mines—in fact, any or all of the Government institutions in or near St. Petersburg—ought also to be visited, if only to see the magnificence of the buildings, and the neatness and order of all the internal arrangements. The State, in Russia, is so far ahead of the mass of the people that these establishments have an effect they could not possibly have in any other country; and it is a fact that the Russian Government not only employs but creates the best high-class workmen in the empire. Some of the "fabrics" are like palaces, and so are other public buildings of a less-dignified character. Thus, one day happening to drive past an edifice with an imposing façade, guarded by beadles of magnificent aspect in the imperial livery, I asked my *isvoschik* the name of the place.

"The Government pawn-office," he replied.

"You must make a mistake," I said, flattering myself that I knew the difference between a palace and a pawnbroker's.

"I ought to know," returned the man, with a smile, "for I am pledged there myself, with all my family."

The pawned *isvoschik* was a serf attached to an estate whose proprietor had borrowed money on mortgage from the Government.

Before leaving St. Petersburg I made an expedition along the frozen river to Cronstadt. The thaw was not expected for at least a fortnight, and the ice was about a yard and a half thick—thicker than which it seldom if ever becomes. On the right, as we stood on the palatial side of the stream, the Neva was crossed by the race-course, where renowned trotters, drawing the lightest of sledges, contend. On the other side the ice was in several places broken up, and men were waiting with sledges to

carry away enormous transparent lumps, which were arranged in Druidical circles, and which, when the sun illuminated them and brought out their prismatic colours, made the most fantastic Stonehenge imaginable. M. Proudhon, in the celebrated peroration of his celebrated pamphlet, addresses those who have taken exclusive possession of the soil, and calls upon them, with indignant sarcasm, to partition the sea and the light of heaven as they have already partitioned the land. In Russia the frozen waters have actually been made into "property," but it is only the taking possession of it without due authorization that is regarded as "*un vol.*" A contractor holds from Government, or from the municipality of St. Petersburg, the right of selling the ice of the Neva. Once, when the Wenham Lake supply failed, a whole cargo was shipped from the nearest open port to London, but, as a general rule, the sale is confined to St. Petersburg, where almost every one has an ice-house. The contractors mark off a certain portion of ice, and with a sharp instrument made for the purpose cut it into long slices, and divide it again transversely into squares, like a Yorkshire pudding. The blocks, after being lifted out of the water, are arranged in the manner I have described, and are afterwards sent off one by one to the purchasers, each block being a sufficient load for a sledge drawn by a single horse. There is a regular ice-market on the Neva; and no more thoroughly winter picture can be seen than the sledges returning from it,—the frost-bearded drivers sitting each on his block like statues on pedestals.

There is something truly Arctic in the aspect of the gradually-widening Neva between St. Petersburg and Cronstadt. After a few miles nothing but ice, with here and there a snowdrift, and at every verst a signal-post, is to be seen. At certain intervals there are stations where the sentinels from time to time, and almost continuously

after dusk, ring bells for the guidance of travellers who may have wandered from the proper course, which, after a snow-storm and when the weather is misty, often happens, even in the day-time. The hyperborean character of the scene was added to in one place by an effective "detail" —the skeleton of an unfortunate horse, completely bleached, and as bare as if the flesh had been gnawed from the bones by wolves. However, there is no sort of danger about a sledge journey from St. Petersburg to Cronstadt. Almost the only accidents possible are those which might arise from occasional fissures in the ice, caused, probably, by strong currents, but which, when they are at all wide, are always carefully bridged over.

Halfway between St. Petersburg and Cronstadt is a refreshment-house and tavern, built of wood, and fastened into the ice by means of beams. The foundation is secure enough, but towards the end of winter the hostelry has rather an unsteady appearance, owing, probably, to the flux and reflux of the tide, which in some places quite destroy the level of the ice. Indeed, at Cronstadt I found every ship in the harbour separated from the ice which surrounded it, and which had to be cut through every morning, to avoid the strain its rise and fall would otherwise have caused to the timbers.

Owing to the early and unexpected appearance of winter, a large number of vessels, of which by far the greater part were English, had been frozen in; so that Cronstadt, until the thaw, had in many respects the appearance of an English seaport. The names of the hotels and taverns were all painted up in English, more or less correct. The streets were full of English sailors (who, by the way, walked about without fur, without great-coats, without even gloves or goloshes, and with their breasts exposed), and a large pleasure-garden (the Cronstadt Cremorne), with all its tenements, had been hired by a certain number of them as a place of habitation. In the frozen harbour the long lanes of ships had had London titles

given to them; thus I walked down "Long Acre," "High Street," the "Commercial Road," and other icy thoroughfares, bearing names which recalled the "*arva beata*" of the British metropolis to the home-sick seamen. But what chiefly interested me was, to find that the English sailors, many and uproarious as their jollifications and sprees had been during their half-year's sojourn at Cronstadt, had, at the same time, established schools in the Russian military port both for the ships' boys and for themselves. Of course they were aided in this by the English residents, foremost among whom were the clergymen of the English church at Cronstadt and at St. Petersburg; but whatever instruction was offered the sailors accepted thankfully, and the Russian Government placed at the disposal of the committee one of its public buildings, in acknowledgment of which the English residents afterwards presented a sum of money to one of the Russian charities. A great deal has been written as to the possibility of taking Cronstadt, but I believe the above to be the first account that has ever been published of its peaceful occupation by the English during the winter of 1856–57.

And now, without further interruption, from St. Petersburg to the Russian frontier. "The way was long, the wind was cold"—in fact, it was a winter's evening in St. Petersburg at the end of March when I started on a five days' journey through the snow. By far the best way of travelling in Russia, as it appears to me now, is in a light, open sledge, which you can buy for a mere trifle, and can sell at the Prussian frontier for half its original cost. Post-horses will be supplied to you with or without delay at the various stations—unless some one more important happens to want the last horses in the stables—at something like twopence a mile for a team of three; this is allowing one horse more than is necessary, unless you are travelling with another person and have a great deal of luggage. If your companion should be a lady, you

must abandon all thoughts of an ordinary sledge, and should purchase a *kibitka*, which has the protection of a hood, and is altogether a heavier vehicle, requiring three horses, for physical reasons, and also according to law. The *kibitka*, however, only costs a few pounds, and can be disposed of as easily as the sledge, and on similar terms. Before starting it is necessary to procure a *padarojna*, a sort of *feuille de route*, requiring the station-masters along the road, who are Government servants, to supply the holder with horses; and a foreigner contemplating a sledge journey of any length would do well to make it in company with some Russian, who will be able to do all the necessary bullying at the post-houses, not to mention other advantages. Russians often propose by advertisement to join another person on a long expedition; so that Englishmen who have no personal acquaintances among the Russians need not for that reason have any difficulty in making the arrangement suggested. Another plan is to engage a courier. But most foreigners seem to consider it less troublesome to take the diligence, which is never kept waiting for horses, except under extraordinary circumstances, such as the passage immediately before of a Government messenger. The advantage of taking your own sledge is that you travel faster—if the horses are always ready—and that you can stop wherever you please; whereas, in going from St. Petersburg or Moscow to Warsaw, or from St. Petersburg to the Prussian frontier, the diligence never stops, except for relays, or because the lumbering vehicle has stuck fast in the snow, or has slipped into a small pit at the side of the road, and requires additional horses to extricate it.

I must add—and this explains some of the inconveniences of Russian travelling—that Russians as a rule never stop, when they have once set out on an expedition, until they have reached their journey's end. They want nothing by the roadside except bread and hot water for their tea, which, with other articles of refreshment,

they usually carry with them. As a natural consequence of this (it has now become to some extent the cause of the continuance of the system), the station-masters have seldom anything fit to offer to any but the most hungry traveller; and an Englishman starting from St. Petersburg with English notions of hotel conveniences on the road, is wofully disappointed at every station until he enters the Polish provinces, when in a certain village of mud, peopled by the dirtiest of Polish Jews that Poland and Judea combined could produce, he becomes desperate at being offered nothing but a piece of black bread and the use of a tea-urn. I remember that for the hot water and a sight of the black bread the infamous proprietor charged the company of travellers as if each had been liberally supplied with tea and its usual accompaniments. Perhaps he was annoyed that no one tried the strength of his teeth on his curious piece of loaf, which was as hard as a stone, and, but for its costliness, might have been entitled to a place in our "Museum of Economic Geology."

The stations near St. Petersburg are far better than those near the Prussian (once Polish) frontier, and there is a marvellous similarity between all of them until after you pass Riga. The best description that can be given of them is an inventory of the things contained in any one:—four tables, with four candlesticks upon them; three sofas; three benches, with three teapots on them; a portrait of the Emperor, a looking-glass, and a list of prices. On entering the room, the men walk straight up to the *carte* to see if they are likely to get anything fit to eat or drink; the ladies go to the looking-glass.

I should like to give some particulars of our journey from St. Petersburg to Tauroggen; but the incidents, though violent, were not exciting in any but a physical sense, and consisted entirely of falls from ledges of frozen snow (caused by a recent storm and drift) into hollows on the other side, some six or eight feet deep. At times the

diligence (which was of course on rails) seemed in an utterly hopeless position, being, in fact, more than once thrown literally on its beam-ends. But ten horses sufficed to pull it to rights, and to drag it, jolting and leaping elephantine leaps as it went, over great ridges and little ravines, and whatever happened to be in the way. When we reached a station, the conductor, in a polyglot dialect, which well became him as an experienced traveller, would say to the passengers, without regard to their nationality, "Moosieu, tchai trinken;" which meant that we might get out and have some tea. Every one got out at every station, except when by some chance a few of the passengers had succeeded in getting to sleep; and even then the magic formula, "Moosieu, tchai trinken," generally roused them. It must be remembered that the tea was sure to be good and refreshing, while the sleep was always doubtful. For my own part, the only real sleep I obtained was at Riga, where there was a delay of nearly an hour; but that was the sleep of the top (or *taupe*)—a condensed sleep, from which I woke as from a dream that might have lasted a year.

Once the amiable conductor had an interesting quarrel in one of the stations with a Livonian clergyman, before whom he had omitted to uncover himself, and who, with a face as red as a turkey-cock, abused him for a good five minutes for his confounded impudence in not paying proper respect to a Christian pastor. There was a German Baron, too, from Riga (where our conductor had to take a second diligence under his care), who was starved into affected sociability through not having provided himself with tea before starting on his travels; and his wife the Baroness, who, indignant at being obliged for some reason or other to travel in a public diligence, consoled herself by abstaining from all intercourse with her fellow-passengers, and by refusing to quit the carriage to sit down with a Polish and a French lady, from whom she, however, contrived to obtain some tea through the

ingenuity of her servant and the rapacity of her husband. I can remember, too, innumerable verst-posts, which, in the absence of all scenery except snow, it was quite a pleasure to count, and black-and-white barriers, marking the boundaries of certain districts, which hung out of the guard-houses across the road like fishing-rods. Then there was a wonderful drive of eighteen miles along a raised road which was mathematically straight (lying evenly between its extreme stations), and which stood out like a jetty above the sea of snow that surrounded it, and had a lamp like a lighthouse at each end. Finally, at Tauroggen there was a pleasant and quite unexpected meeting with some English bottled stout, which was discovered by a Finnish captain, who said he liked everything English but the English marauding expeditions in the Gulf of Finland, and which was partaken of by every one except the German Baroness, who actually preferred standing outside in the frost to entering a kind of tavern where people who travelled in diligences were drinking beer.

The Prussian frontier is marked by a fishing-rod barrier, like those on the Russian roads, except that on the Russian barriers the black-and-white diamond-check is relieved, or perhaps made still uglier, by the addition of a thin red stripe. On the other side stands a sentinel in a helmet and a grey great-coat, a uniform which only differs from that of the Russian line in being a tighter fit. The fields, as in Russia, are still covered with snow; but the snow is melting. In the little reception-room, half café, half custom-house, where the baggage is examined, there is, as in the Russian post-houses, a portrait of His Majesty; but we are ten yards from Russia now, and *this* Majesty is the King of Prussia. A young lady from St. Petersburg asks innocently whether that is not the portrait of some member of the Imperial family? This causes a laugh, in which the Polish lady heartily joins, for Prussia is not yet supposed to have an independent policy. Coffee and rolls are brought in, and

much sensation is caused by the production of a table-cloth as white as the hot milk, and which, when it is spread out on the table, excites murmurs of applause, for during nearly a week we have not been accustomed to cleanliness. The large-handed Phillises are pleased at the effect their entertainment is producing upon the poor Russian savages; and the Custom-house officer is almost patronizing with his civility, as much as to say, "This is not the sort of thing you are accustomed to on the other side, my poor emancipated serfs. You are now in a civilized country." At last the conductor attached to the "extra-fast-post," takes up the idea, and thinks he must distinguish himself by a voluntary on the horn. We enter the carriage. The postilion succeeds in playing a tune. He is certainly more of a virtuoso than our Russian friend, who used merely to blow on his bugle a very loud blast whenever there was occasion to warn the labourers with their carts, or the drovers with their herds, or the workmen who were clearing the road that he was coming, and that it would be advisable to get out of his way. But when the road was tolerably level, with only a snowdrift here and there, not more than two or three feet high, he would make his horses gallop their ten miles an hour, whereas the cornist of the German "extra-schnell-post" has no notion of any pace beyond an amble. No one need or would get out of his way unless it suited him to do so, and that is why he devotes so much attention to his horn, which he really blows as if horn-playing were his sole business, and the conveyance of passengers from the frontier to Tilsit did not concern him in the least. If it were not for that parti-coloured barrier, the Russian conductor, even now when the German is halfway to Tilsit, would catch him up long before he reached the city of the treaty. It would be well for the Germans if the energetic Russian driver and the sentimental German horn-player were not representative men; for some day,

the road being clear, and all Russian obstacles overcome, the St. Petersburg diligence might enter Tauroggen at such a pace that no slender barriers of black and white would suffice to stop it.

POSTSCRIPT.

PRINCE DOLGOROUKI, at the commencement of his recently-published work entitled *La Vérité sur la Russie*, observes that Russians alone can write (by which he of course means *ought to write*) on the subject of Russia. Many Russians have made the same remark, and no one is more convinced of its truth, in a general sense, than I am; for which reason I have not written on any subject, from literature to cookery, without having a Russian author, and, if possible, two or more Russian authors of different tendencies, by my side to guide me. I have even quoted descriptions of places from Russian authors whenever I have seen an opportunity of doing so with advantage. Politics, as such, I have purposely avoided, as many other writers, in England, France, and Germany, would also do if they knew enough about the subject to be aware of its difficulties: I speak here less of the external policy of the empire than of the movements of political parties in Russia, of the aspirations of some and

of the (I hope) unavailing regrets of others. At the same time, without pretending to have anyopinion worth communicating as to how far the reforming policy of Alexander II. will be successfully carried out, or to what changes in the present system of government it may lead, I have found it impossible to omit all allusion to some of the political questions which are discussed in almost every number of contemporary Russian reviews, as for instance between the "Slavophils," who maintain that the natural course of Russo-Slavonian civilization was impeded and turned in a false direction by Peter the Great, and who have now their own organ, entitled *Russkaia Beseda* (with a supplement specially devoted to the Emancipation question), and the "Westerns," who do not think it beneath them to study the history and development of other nations more fortunate than Russia has been. Russians whose opinions I considered valuable assured me that the best organ of this latter party, which is by far the most numerous, was the *Russki Vestnik*, and I have published several long extracts from the pages of this review on subjects which I knew would be interesting to English readers.

If I have no right to speak about Russia, I have at least a right to speak of what the Russo-Slavonian party think *they* have a right to say about England. It seems to me that they mistake our successful pursuit of material welfare for absolute materialism: at all events, they are very fond of calling us materialists—simply, as I believe, because we are prosperous. To men who turn their backs upon all the most highly civilized portion of Europe such errors are natural. But they ought not to pretend to understand those whom they profess to ignore. Otherwise these idealist proprietors, boasting of the primitive virtues of serfs whom they have not yet emancipated, might be reminded that a materialist British Parliament, thirty years ago, voted twenty millions (a hundred and twenty millions of roubles) for the liberation of the slaves

in our West India Islands, and that the British Government has gone to a prodigious expense and has incurred considerable odium abroad by its efforts to suppress the slave-trade in all parts of the world. The Russians have missionaries like ourselves: but theirs are in the service of the Government,—ours are, for the most part, sent out by private societies. The "Slavophils" are not obliged to know this, but they must surely be aware that the English Bible Society, in the reign of Alexander I., established branch societies in Russia. If any of them visited Cronstadt in the winter of 1856–7, they might have seen the school that was opened there by English subscriptions for the benefit of a few hundred English sailors and sailor-boys whose ships were ice-bound, whereas Mr. Koloomzin, a Russian, has told us (I would not hazard the assertion myself), that in the interior of Russia there are whole villages of peasants, who, however ideal their natural dispositions, are *permanently* without the means of obtaining the most ordinary instruction.

Are the Russians becoming materialists because they have now a railway from St. Petersburg to Wilna, as well as from St. Petersburg to Moscow? We have more railways than any other country, and doubtless we constructed them with a view to material advantages,—but also because we had faith in certain scientific truths in which other nations did not thoroughly believe until their applicability had been demonstrated at our expense, and to the great loss of the original speculators.

The Russians, moreover, have published admirable translations of many of our best poets, and it is astonishing that even a small party of fanatics should be found among them to accuse a nation possessing such a rich imaginative literature of materialism. The piercingly witty but malignant Heine saw the absurdity of this accusation (which he had himself repeatedly made), when he came to reflect on the number of great poets England had produced, and he took the trouble to ex-

plain the seeming anomaly by a paradox. The "Slavophils," however, do not even bring forward a paradox in support of their charge.

The reader, if he has noticed the extracts I have given from the *Russki Vestnik* in Chapter I., will have seen that the more liberal party, which includes the great majority of educated Russians, appreciate England very differently. I have not seen this review since the beginning of 1860, when it was publishing, Professor Vizinski's admirable lectures on the History of England and a translation of M. Léonce de Lavergne's excellent "Agricultural Studies." I have said somewhere, *àpropos* of M. de Custine's book on Russia, that French tourists seem to invent and arrange anecdotes with great facility, and in support of my remark pointed to the curious stories some of them have told about England. I meant what I said; but lest I should be misunderstood (which would annoy me, if no one else), I may add that it is impossible to have a higher opinion than I have of the excellent books and articles, full of knowledge, judgment, and good feeling, that MM. Philarète Chasles, John Lemoinne, Eugène Forçade, Prévost de Paradol, and a few other men of letters in France (among whom the name of M. de Montalembert will suggest itself to every one), have published on English affairs and English literature.

In speaking of the Kremlin and of the Troitza monastery, I was obliged to say something about the long struggles of Russia against the Tartars; and similarly, the chief monument in the city of Moscow, the painting on the drop-scene of the Moscow opera-house, and the subject of Glinka's most celebrated opera, alike compelled me, in mentioning them, to allude to the causes of the old animosity between Russians and Poles, and to point to the simple historical fact, that in 1612 the Poles held Moscow, and that the Russians of Moscow rose against the Poles in that year, as the Poles of Warsaw rose against the Russians in 1831, only with a different result.

Finally, it has always seemed to me that we attach too much importance to Napoleon's political sayings, and especially to his often-quoted prophecy (it cannot be quoted much longer now), that in fifty years Europe would be Cossack or Republican. He meant that it would be "Cossack," for he also said that he alone could have kept Russia in check; and during the last forty years people have constantly been terrified—not so much in England as in other parts of Europe—by his terrible alternative, of which, it may be remembered, a variation was presented very effectively to the Parisians just before the *coup d'état* of December 2nd, 1851, under the title of *Le Spectre Rouge et le Canon Russe.* Here I am perhaps treading on dangerous ground; but, without pretending to know anything about "the designs of Russia," I may point to what she has already done in that immense region which separates Russia proper from China. Instead of endeavouring to crush European civilization at the head of a million of barbarians from the Mongolian plains, which is a project that has often been attributed to her, we find that she is civilizing and Christianizing the Siberian tribes, and rendering their country habitable for decent, peaceable settlers. Russia saved Europe in the thirteenth century from an irruption of Mongols, not through love of Europe, no doubt, but through faith in Christianity, which prevented her from forming an alliance with infidels and idolaters; and for two centuries afterwards she formed an effectual barrier against the hordes which constantly swept towards Europe from the distant confines of China. At present, instead of a tide of invasion from East to West, a tide of colonization from West to East has set in.

In the popular writings of the day I often find Tartars and Slavonians, and the very different characteristics of the two races, confounded. J. J. Rousseau, in one of the most disgusting passages of his "Confessions," speaks of a Slavonian, whom he afterwards calls a Moor, and in a third place a Jew! This is strange ethnology, but it

is neither better nor worse than that of the writers who speak of the Russians as Tartars and as Mongols.

I intended to publish some specimens of Russian music at the end of this volume. Since I formed that intention, Prince George Galitzin (of whose admirable choir I have given a brief account at page 203, little thinking at the time that its distinguished director would ever have to make his appearance in London, not as an amateur, but as a professional musician) has given several concerts of Russian music, and intends to give some more in the coming spring; while Glinka's Russian opera "Life for the Tzar" is being translated into English under Prince Galitzin's auspices, and will be produced next autumn at one of our London opera-houses. Moreover, Messrs. Boosey and Co. are about to publish, in the usual music-sheet form, some of the Russian songs of which I have spoken. All things considered, then, it appears to me unadvisable to encumber the present volume, already sufficiently bulky, with specimens of Russian music.

FINIS.

Woodfall and Kinder, Printers, Angel Court, Skinner Street, London.

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018